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## Cold weather cash for millions

### Thousands are still cut off as snow spreads

By JILL SHERMAN, GILLIAN BOWDITCH AND JONATHAN PRYNN

TENS of millions of pounds have been promised to sick and elderly people across large areas of Britain as continuing Arctic conditions claimed at least three lives yesterday and disrupted transport.

The Government's £8.50 weekly cold weather payments go out automatically to those deemed vulnerable when temperatures fall to freezing or below for a seven-day period in a specific area.

They are made to three groups on income support: families with children under

sub-zero temperatures persisting through much of the country until the weekend.

Last night Opposition MPs called for the cold weather payment system to be reviewed to take into account the exceptionally low temperatures in Scotland and the North of England. Charities complained that many on income support would not be entitled to any cash.

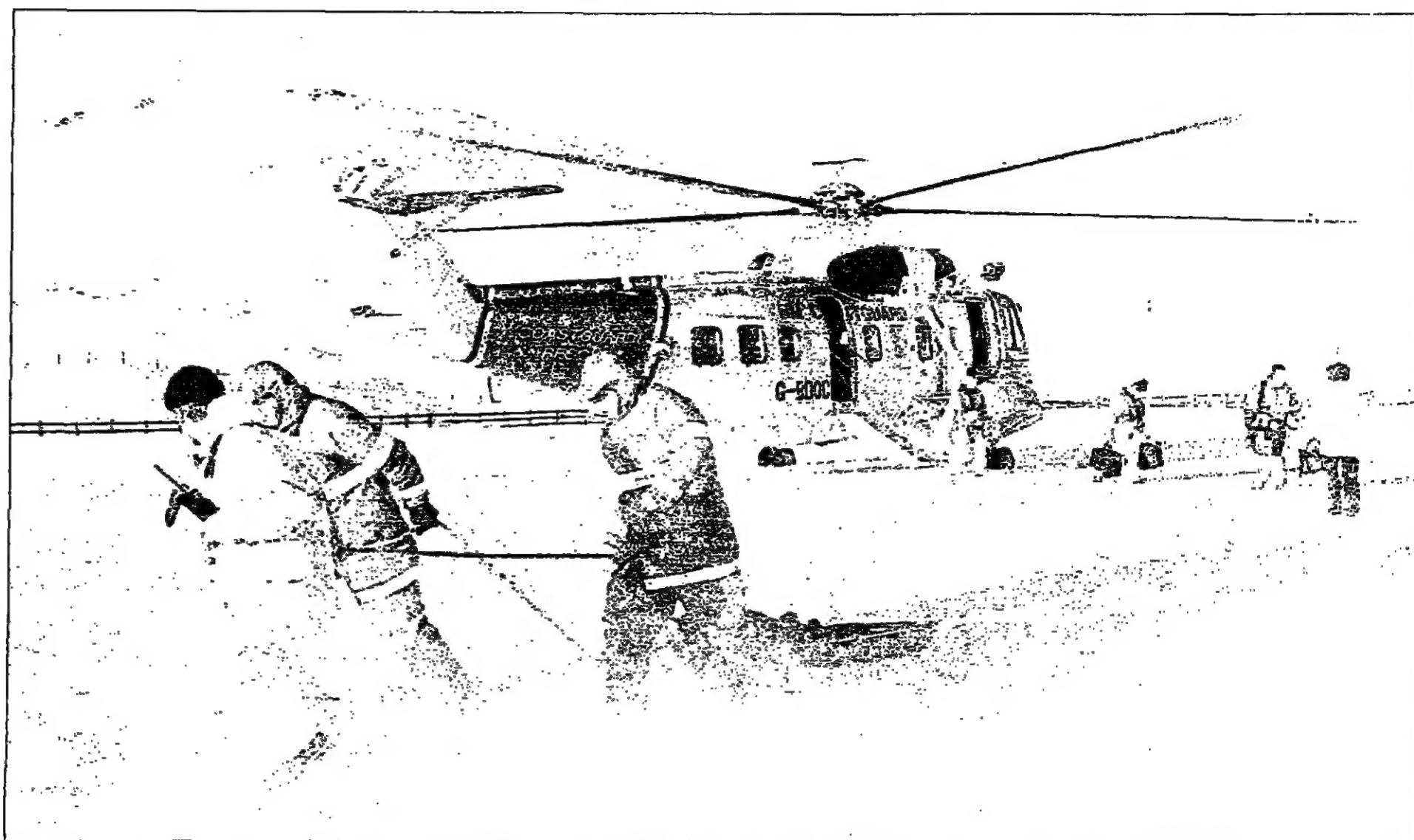
George Foulkes, Labour MP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, called for a "double premium" when the temperature fell to -10C (14F) for 24 hours or longer. The chairman of the all-party pensioners' group said: "The weather is so severe that there ought to be some consideration about a double premium for when it gets below -10C degrees."

David Winnick, MP for Walsall North, also criticised the scheme, adding: "The Prime Minister should intervene to authorise payments in all areas of the country. The weather is sufficiently harsh and, therefore, these payments are certainly justified, modest as they are."

Some of the worst conditions during the current cold snap have been endured by those in Shetland and the Western Isles, where scores of households were still without power last night.

Most of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the east of England from the Scottish border as far south as Essex remained blanketed under snow yesterday after heavy falls on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day.

Snow showers are expected today in Essex and Kent with



Shetland coastguard rescuers taking a suspected hypothermia victim to hospital at Lerwick. There have been 12 such flights in the past two days

Birmingham, North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, West Midlands and Wiltshire.

Meanwhile, two children died in Co Durham after a lorry smashed into a stationary car on the busy snowfall-hit A19 near Easington. The 15-year-old boy and his four-year-old sister from Tyneside were in the back seat.

In Northern Ireland, one man died and another was injured in a car crash early yesterday as temperatures plunged to a December record low of -13C (9F). The accident

happened when the men's Peugeot 205 left the Ballygawley Road at Dungannon, Co Tyrone. The hurt man suffered head and leg injuries.

Forecasters said yesterday that Scotland was enduring one of its coldest winters in memory. Shetland, the island group 80 kilometers north of Orkney with a population of 22,500, was in the teeth of the storm.

The Islands Council, which declared a state of emergency on Boxing Day, met representatives of the police and coast-

guard yesterday to work out a strategy for coping. The chief executive, Malcolm Green, said there was no need to call on outside assistance.

Shetland islanders, known for their strong community spirit, were visiting elderly and vulnerable neighbours to ensure that they were safe.

Neville Davis, of the Shetland coastguard, said it was working as a secondary emergency service. "We are mainly involved with airlifting people to hospital. We've had about 12 evacuations over the last

couple of days. We took a couple of elderly people suffering from suspected hypothermia to hospital today and we've airlifted people with heart problems and breathing difficulties."

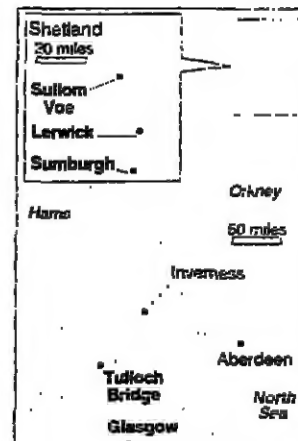
"We also airlifted a mother who was stranded with a three-day-old baby in Summerville back to Lerwick so that she could get supplies."

Mr Davis said the rescue centre in Lerwick had had electricity supplies throughout, as had the local hospital, but the whole of the island had

been affected by the snow. "I've certainly never seen anything like this on Shetland before. Walking to the helicopter landing pad, the snow was knee deep. There has been a huge effort to get the roads open," he said.

The Lerwick lifeboat was delivering coal, milk and bottled gas on a 140-mile round trip to the most remote communities. The lifeboat *Shelvia* will also take food to three families in Brindister who have run out. The first

Continued on page 2, col 3



### Forte in fast food sale

Forte confirmed the sale of the Little Chef, Happy Eater and Welcome Break roadside businesses to Whitbread for £1.05 billion as part of its defence against the £3 billion bid from Granada. The disposal leaves Forte as a pure hotels group.

The deal raised City hopes that Forte would return some of the proceeds to shareholders through a special dividend. The deadline for its defence against Granada, an ideal opportunity to announce a special dividend, is next Tuesday. Pages 21, 25

### Public sector pay clash looms

John Major faces confrontation over pay with doctors, nurses and teachers, who are seeking increases of up to 8 per cent. Their review bodies are expected to recommend rises above the inflation rate. Page 2

## Christmas presents reach hostages held in Kashmir

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

TWO British hostages held in Kashmir since July have received taped Christmas greetings, woolly socks and winter clothing from loved ones through intermediaries in India. The captives are guarded by 20 separatist gunmen at 10,000 ft in the Himalayan foothills, their lives in the balance.

The British High Commission in Delhi, which has made extraordinary efforts to save the men, is seeking face-to-face talks with representatives of Al Faran, the kidnappers group. Attempts were being made before the holiday to arrange a meeting in Delhi with Hilary Synnott, the Minister at the High Commission, in the hope of persuading the rebels to

release the men in a humanitarian Christmas gesture.

There were direct telephone contacts between Sir Nicholas Fenn, the High Commissioner, and representatives of Al Faran earlier this month in which it was made clear that the British Government would not pay money to the rebels. The strategy of diplomats in recent weeks has been to try to persuade the group to let the men go over Christmas, which would be interpreted around the world as a magnanimous gesture.

British diplomats who have spent months in Srinagar, capital of the Kashmir Valley, made contact with various militant organisations before establishing direct commun-

ications with Al Faran. Militants have confirmed that the presents reached the two Britons, Keith Mangan and Paul Wells. The group is also holding an American, Donald Huchings, and a German, Dirk Hasert.

Indian troops know almost precisely where the captives are held. "They are not moving around very much because of the severe cold," a senior government source said. "It is snowing heavily."

At the request of Britain, America and Germany, the Indian Government has ordered troops not to attempt to rescue the men in a commando operation, since the captives would almost certainly

## Father pleads for help in hunt for Celine

By JOANNA BALE

THE father of the missing French student Celine Figard made a public appeal yesterday for help in tracing her.

Speaking through a relative acting as an interpreter, Bernard Figard asked British lorry drivers to come forward with clues to the identity of the man who gave his daughter a lift on Tuesday last week. The last time she was seen, she was talking to the driver of a Mercedes lorry.

Mr Figard, a 44-year-old farmer, said: "Please keep helping us, we need to find Celine. Lorry drivers, if you have any information regarding the Mercedes lorry, please keep helping the police."

He also appealed directly to his daughter, saying: "Celine, if you can hear us, if you can see us, please show yourself."

All your family and friends are waiting for you."

Haulage experts said yesterday that it was likely the lorry, which bore no company name or logo, was one of thousands of rented vehicles and would be difficult to trace. It was described as a white, two-axle 1733 Mercedes Benz tractor unit, about three years old, pulling a light grey trailer with a 38 to 40-ton Thermo King refrigeration unit.

Detective Constable Steve White of Hampshire Police, said: "There are about 1,300 of these particular Mercedes trucks on the road and the only unusual thing about this one was that it was not sign-written, which might suggest it was rented."

Lorry holds key, page 3

## Princess goes on Caribbean sunshine holiday

By JOANNA BALE



Princess: island-bound

THE Princess of Wales left snow-bound Britain for the sunny Caribbean yesterday, as her two sons continued to enjoy a traditional royal Christmas with their father at Sandringham.

The Princess, who boarded a plane at Heathrow, was thought to be heading for the island of Nevis, which she visited three years ago with her sons during weeks of the announcement of her official separation from the Prince of Wales.

Her British West Indian Airways flight was destined for Antigua in the Leeward Islands, from where she was expected to

take a 20-minute flight on to Nevis. Princes William and Harry, 13 and 11, are still at Sandringham with their father, although they could join her later as they are not due back at school until January 10.

On her last trip to Nevis in 1993, the Princess stayed at the Montpelier Plantation Inn in the south of the island. A spokeswoman said: "If the Princess was staying here we certainly would not be confirming the fact."

The Princess is reported to have had a cold Christmas lunch, left for her by staff who had been given the holiday off, followed by a trip to her psychotherapist

on Boxing Day. She spent more than an hour visiting Susie Orbach, who counselled her over her bulimia several years ago. The Princess was pictured smiling as she left the feminist writer's clinic at her home in northwest London. She was also reported to have visited the clinic on Christmas Eve after seeing Prince William and Prince Harry off to Sandringham.

While Nevis was thought to be the most likely destination for the Princess, Antigua is at the centre of a long chain of islands, many of them providing the seclusion she is no doubt seeking, and some of which she has visited before.



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# Major faces battle over public-sector pay demands

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

JOHN MAJOR is facing a damaging confrontation with teachers, doctors and nurses over demands for significant pay rises next year.

Teachers' leaders will today call for rises of at least 4 per cent while the Royal College of Nursing has asked for an extra 8 per cent. The British Medical Association has just submitted a claim of between 5 and 8 per cent.

The five independent pay review bodies, which cover 1.4 million public sector workers, are expected to recommend increases averaging above the 3.1 per cent rate of inflation, but this is not expected to go far enough for most groups involved. The bodies will make their recommendations to the Prime Minister next month and a decision will be taken by the Cabinet within a few weeks.

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, will fight any attempts to award high pay rises, arguing that this would push up inflation and jeopardise tax cuts in the next Budget. He has already made clear that any extra money and that all public-sector pay rises will have to be offset by gains in efficiency and productivity.

Today the National Association of Head Teachers says

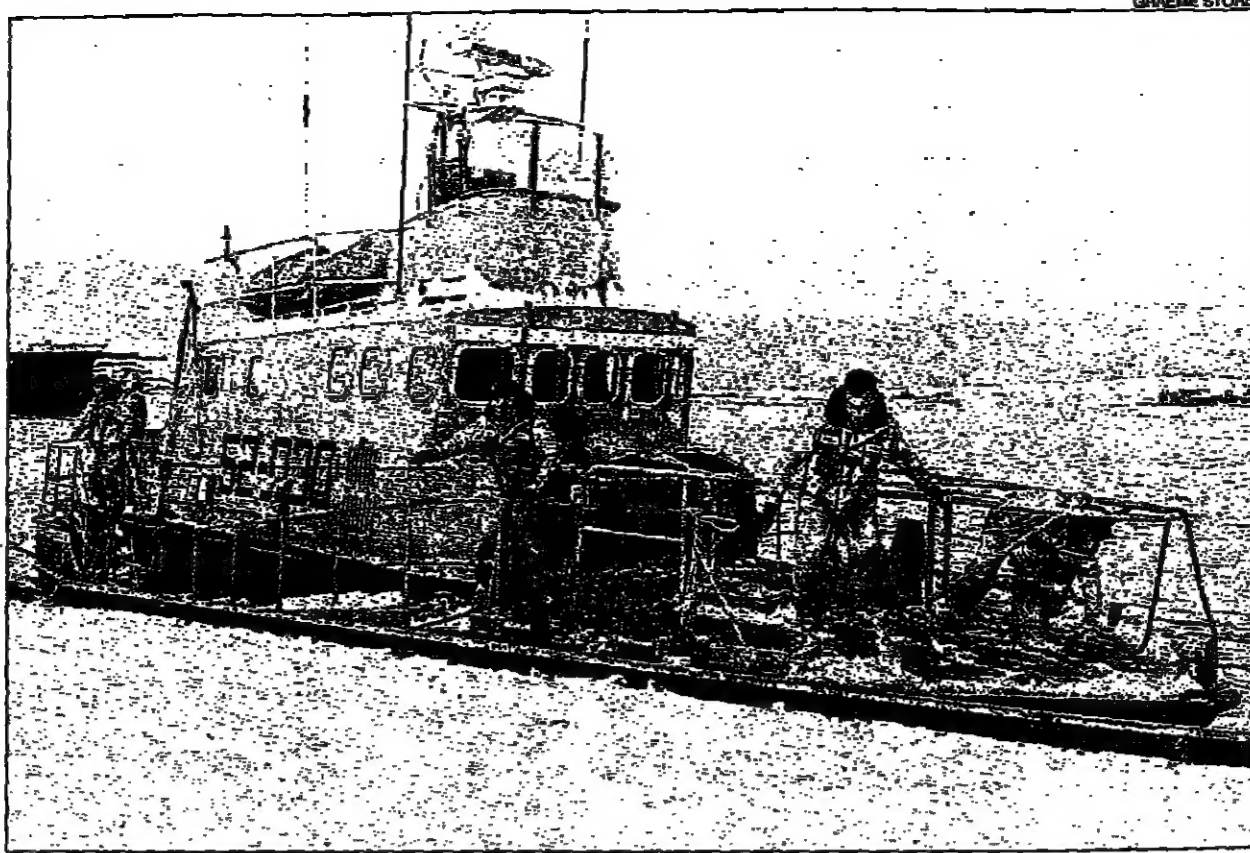
that schools will find it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain good teachers unless they are given a substantial rise. The move is expected to inflame rows over funding shortages just as ministers hoped they had died down.

David Hart, the association's general secretary, says that, as the economy recovers, good graduates will be tempted increasingly into better jobs. In a letter sent to the School Teachers' Review Body today, Mr Hart says that a poor pay rise would increase the risk of another teaching shortage. Experts have already estimated that there could be a shortfall of 30,000 by the end of the decade.

"The Government must accept that there is a looming crisis in teacher recruitment which must be averted at all costs," Mr Hart says. "This can only be averted if the STRB awards teachers a pay settlement for 1996 which enables schools to recruit and retain. That means it must at least be competitive with the rise in average earnings."

Teachers, nurses and doctors have all suffered from Mr Clarke's public-sector pay freeze over the past two years. The Royal College of Nursing, which represents nearly 500,000 nurses, is now demanding a significant award to catch up. It is also arguing against any local pay bargaining next year despite the Government's desire to extend this. Any clash with ministers could test the college's new rule, which allows its members to take strike action.

This year the Government gave nurses a 1 per cent pay rise and allowed NHS trusts to add up to another 2 per cent. After a successful campaign by the college, 97 per cent of trusts eventually agreed to award their nurses the full 3 per cent. "This year demonstrates that local pay bargaining is a farce," said a nurses' spokesman. "It took nine months for health trusts to agree to the 3 per cent."



A lifeline in the big freeze: the Aith lifeboat arrives at Lerwick to ferry supplies to the west side of Shetland

## Man dies after 45 minutes under ice

By Leyla Linton

A MAN who fell through ice as he tried to rescue his dog from a lake died last night after spending more than 45 minutes under the surface.

Rescuers repeatedly risked their lives in attempts to reach Robert Giles, 25. When they finally pulled him from the water, his body temperature had dropped to 18°C and he was not breathing. However, the body's organs can last longer without oxygen in cold temperatures. He survived for three hours after resuscitation.

Mr Giles's dog, a white highland terrier, managed to clamber to safety by itself from

Anton's Lake near Andover, Hampshire.

One of the rescuers, Paul Parry, a fireman, plunged into the water three times. He said: "The first time, I had a line tied to me, but the water was so cold I could not break the ice and maintain my footing. I went back after someone had got a surfboard, and I paddled out to where he had fallen, about 30ft from shore."

"I still could not see the bottom of the lake so I came back and got a hook to try to find him. It kept getting stuck in the weeds and mud."

Detective Constable Tony Hewitt, a diving enthusiast, heard about the emergency on

his radio and went home to fetch equipment. Inspector David Waller, of Andover police, said: "He got some ropes and his diving suit and began smashing the ice. He waded into the water, breaking the ice as he went, but could not submerge himself because he did not have the right gear. By this time, a coastguard helicopter had arrived and Tony waded back to the shore."

"He roped up with a coastguard frogman and they waded back into the water. The coastguard, who was also not equipped to dive underneath, thought he saw a person on the bottom. They took it in

turns to duck under, and Tony found the man in about three metres of water. He was on the bottom of the lake. However, they could not pull him up."

The two men went back to the bank and the coastguard took some of DC Hewitt's weights. He swam back out and dived under and finally pulled Mr Giles to the surface. People on the bank pulled them in on their ropes.

Mr Giles was flown to the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester, where Dr Martin Nancekivil said: "The cold would have stopped the heart and other organs. Their oxygen requirement is then drastically reduced."

## Millions to get cold weather cash

Continued from page 1  
supplies to reach Shetland from the mainland since Christmas Eve are due into Lerwick today on the P&O ferry *St Clair*.

The privatised electricity company Scottish Hydro-Electric expected all but a handful of homes to be reconnected today but admitted that some families would wake up this morning to a fifth day without power.

Shetland, where it was -5C (23F) overnight, was one of the mildest places in Scotland yesterday. In Glasgow, the temperature fell to -18.7C (1F)

in the early hours, making it the coldest night there on record. Tulloch Bridge in the southwest Highlands was the coldest place in Scotland yesterday at -20C (-3F) - several degrees below Moscow or Oslo and on a par with Helsinki and Stockholm. Six months ago, the remote moor near Fort William, which has an automatic weather station, was the hottest place in Britain for several days with temperatures of 30C (86F).

Rail services in Scotland were said to be in a state of "near anarchy". Hundreds of trains were cancelled when

wheels stuck to frozen tracks as temperatures fell to -21C (-4F). In the worst incident, more than a hundred passengers were trapped in a tunnel under Glasgow city centre for eight hours when the train they were in broke down.

Although all main roads on the British mainland were open by lunchtime yesterday, all routes in Shetland remained blocked and hundreds of high-level minor roads in the Highlands of Scotland and the moors of northern England stayed impassable.

Only in Nottingham was there a thaw - at the city ice-



Scarborough yesterday: less warm than this welcome

rink. Despite sub-zero temperatures outside, the David Essex ballet "Beauty and the Beast" featuring the Russian All Stars had to be abandoned

## Cold kills boy who tried to walk home

By a Staff Reporter

A BOY froze to death while trying to walk home after a car accident.

John Colquhoun, 16, collapsed in sub-zero temperatures only about a mile from the scene of the accident early on Christmas Day.

The teenager had tried to walk the three miles to his house after his friend's car skidded off the road and became stuck in snow near the village of Mauchline, Strathclyde. His family had to identify John's body on Christmas Day.

The apprentice slater had been at a party and was returning home when the car left the icy road. He and his friend decided to make for their homes, in opposite directions, on foot. Strathclyde Police said that John, of Dronagan, was discovered later in a frozen state. He was dead on arrival at Ayr Hospital.

His sister Sandy said: "He was wearing just a thin jacket and it had started snowing hard when he was trying to walk. It was extremely cold that night."

"As far as we know, he tried to find shelter, fell asleep and just died in the snow. It is just terrible. We knew something was wrong when he didn't show up in the morning and then heard on the radio that a body had been found."

"We had to go to the hospital and identify him. It is a terrible thing to happen at any time, but to happen on Christmas Day is just tragic."

## Lawyers vote on complaint scheme

Ballot papers have been sent to 12,500 members of the Bar on whether it should introduce a complaints system. A ballot of the whole membership was decided before Christmas by a meeting which rejected a modified scheme proposed by Bar leaders.

Peter Goldsmith, QC, the outgoing Bar chairman, says in a letter with ballot papers that the scheme is now modest and contains "strong safeguards to protect barristers against frivolous and unfounded complaints". Rejecting it would send "all the wrong messages about the attitude of the Bar to our clients" and would expose the Bar to the imposition of a "far more draconian" and externally operated scheme.

Watchdog in dock, page 6

## NHS drugs 'privatised'

The Government was accused yesterday of stealthily privatising NHS medicines. A health management expert said that continually putting up prescription charges, blacklisting certain drugs and removing others from the prescription register added up to privatisation.

Alan East-Slater, a Research Fellow at the Health Services Management Centre, Birmingham University, claimed in a public finance journal that the Government was following the policy "without either admitting it or having the mandate to do it".

## Beef sales 'down 25%'

Almost 1½ million households which bought beef in the run-up to Christmas last year decided not to this year, according to research by the marketing firm Nielsen. There was a steady decline in beef buying from the beginning of last month and by the week ending December 16 sales were down more than 25 per cent, compared to the same time in 1994.

Sales of beefburgers in the first two weeks of December were down 25 per cent, then continued to fall to more than 40 per cent in the week ending December 16, compared to last year.

## Banks urges peer's sacking

The Labour MP Tony Banks called on Tony Blair to sack Baroness Mallett, the party's home and legal affairs spokeswoman, because of her support for hunting. Mr Banks demanded her removal after she said that Labour peers could scupper any Bill to ban fox-hunting.

Lady Mallett, who rides with the Bicester Hunt, said that entrenched opposition by peers would effectively prevent such a Bill becoming law. Mr Banks said the abolition of hunting was agreed Labour Party policy and it was "unacceptable" that Lady Mallett should defy it.

## Major aide turns to gas

An adviser to John Major is to leave Downing Street in the new year to work for British Gas. Roderic Lyne, 43, a former diplomat, will be seconded to the company's overseas business team.

Mr Lyne helped to negotiate the IRA's ceasefire 16 months ago. British Gas said: "He will remain a Foreign Office employee and will be returning to the diplomatic service when his secondment finishes." Whitehall sources said there was nothing significant about Mr Lyne's departure: a normal stint for a private secretary was two to four years.

## Christmas cheer but no freedom for hostages

Continued from page 1

constituency. It is not the first time compensation has been mentioned: earlier in the crisis Al Faran broke off contacts with Indian intermediaries after local newspapers published reports saying the rebels were seeking ransom.

Al Faran said the stories were planted by the Indian Government to make the group look like "common criminals". The last direct contact with Indian officials via radio was on November 26, when the kidnappers demanded the release of three top militants, whom they named.

Al Faran has been told that India will not release prisoners in exchange for the hostages. The captives' partners, in appealing for the men's release, have emphasised in public statements that there is no possibility of the demand being met. Al Faran has claimed in statements at various times during the crisis

that one or more of the men was ill or injured, and it is known that the group has sought medicines from local pharmacies. There is no firm evidence, however, that any of the men is seriously unwell.

All the hostages were trekking with their partners when they were seized. The women were released immediately. They waited out the crisis for months in Srinagar and at the British High Commission compound in Delhi before returning home.

Al Faran appears to have been created specifically for the seizure of foreign hostages in an attempt to get key militants out of Indian jails. It is believed to be linked with Harkat-ul-Ansar, a militant organisation based in Pakistan. One theory is that it is a renegade group operating in the independence of Harkat's leadership. Islamic groups around the world have appealed for Al Faran to let the men go because it is sullying the reputation of the separatist cause in Kashmir.

Even among Islamic fundamentalist groups in Pakistan there is a sense that the group realises its demands will not be met and that it is looking for a face-saving way out. Abdul Hamid Turkey, self-styled commander-in-chief of Al Faran, was killed in an exchange of fire with Indian forces on December 4 in a village near Anantnag in the Kashmir Valley, close to where the hostages are being held in the Pahalgam area.



Mangan and Wells, third and fourth from left, with three other hostages when they were seized

## CPS apologises to court for day off

THE Crown Prosecution Service began an inquiry yesterday into why it had not sent anyone to a Boxing Day magistrates' court sitting, leaving 31 defendants to walk free (Joanna Bale writes).

Gordon Etherington, the Chief Crown Prosecutor, began the investigation after sending a senior official to apologise to the court. Andrew Hadji, branch prosecutor for Camberwell, south London, went to Old Street Magistrates' Court and issued a statement, saying: "Once [the Chief Crown Prosecutor] has all the facts, he will be making reports and taking what action is necessary." The hearing was one of a

handful held around the country on Boxing Day to deal with people arrested over Christmas.

The 31 defendants, facing charges ranging from supplying drugs to burglary, were freed when Michael Johnstone, a stipendiary magistrate, discharged them because nobody from the CPS turned up to prosecute them. A spokesman for the service said that 13 defendants would be rearrested: a decision had yet to be made on the others.

Liz Justice, a CPS spokeswoman, said: "The court was not on our rota system so we did not send anyone. The irony is that we did have a spare

advocate on stand-by, but no one managed to contact us."

"We are taking this very seriously because we don't want people walking the streets when they should have been locked up. We are still trying to trace one member of staff to see whether she was notified, but we will not be able to build up a complete picture until people return from the Christmas break."

She added last night: "We have no record of being officially notified at our head office that there was a court sitting at Old Street on Boxing Day. The clerk had put a notice up in the CPS room at the court, but that was overlooked."

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Haulage experts believe unmarked vehicle was rented and will prove difficult to trace

## Lorry holds key to French student's disappearance

By JOANNA BALE

THE lorry in which the missing French student Celine Figard was last seen is likely to prove difficult to trace, haulage experts said yesterday. As police issued posters showing the Mercedes Benz lorry, it emerged that it was probably one of thousands owned or rented by small freelance operators.

The lorry had no company name or logo on it. Ian Norwell, of Mercedes Benz, said: "If the truck and trailer were part of a big company, they would have had a name on the side. This was almost certainly a rented trailer because it was plain. He was also driving a plain white Mercedes tractor unit truck, which is the most common colour ordered by big companies because they are easier to sell second-hand to smaller companies and owner-drivers. "He hasn't been traced yet, which suggests he might be an owner-driver, but they do tend to personalise their own trucks, whereas this one was plain, so was most likely rented."

Mercedes Benz sells about 2,000 tractor units every year at an average cost of £70,000 each, and many are sold on to second or third owners. The 1733 model is between three and six years old.

John Gumeridge, of the Freight Transport Association, also said yesterday that the driver was probably renting and would therefore be difficult to trace. "If he worked for a large company, he would have been traced by now. Given the time of year, with the pressure for pre-Christmas deliveries, he might have been making a trip he would not normally make."

"The best bet in tracing will

come from other truck drivers who tend to know each other. The description of the lorry is quite specific, but a lot of people who hold truck driving licences appear and disappear from the scene. They don't necessarily drive full-time, so this man may have gone to ground, even abroad."

David Lowe, sales director of Thermo King Northern, said that Thermo King trailers were very common. "About half of all refrigerated trailers on the road are Thermo King. There are thousands of them."



The Mercedes 1733: one of 1,300 on the road

This one probably belongs to a rental company because it did not have a name on the side, but all sorts of people rent trailers, especially at Christmas, including large companies."

One employee at TIP, a trailer rental firm, said: "A new Thermo-King trailer costs about £40,000, but you can rent one for £300 a week. They are very common, and you get all sorts of people renting them, from blue-chip companies to one man set-ups."

Detective Chief Superintendent Des Thomas, who is leading the hunt for Mlle Figard, said the lorry driver held the key to the investiga-

tion: "If he's a bona fide chap there's no reason why he should not come forward and help us." He said the incident room had been inundated with calls offering leads, but added: "I have no doubt at all we will find this lorry driver. My great concern is we will not find him in time to recover Celine."

He said police were treating the search as a murder inquiry. "I had the unfortunate duty of telling her father I am somewhat pessimistic about the outcome of this. We all hope and pray we will find Celine alive. It will be the best thing that could happen, but experience has shown that is not necessarily the case after this amount of time."

Mlle Figard was last known to have accepted a lift from a lorry driver at the Granada service station on the A34 at Chieveley, near Newbury, Berkshire. It is thought the lorry driver from whom she accepted the lift had told her that he would take her as far as Salisbury, Wiltshire.

She had intended to catch a bus from Salisbury to Fordingbridge, Hampshire, to spend Christmas with her cousin, Jean-Marc Figard, 24. Because of problems ringing him from the service area, she was going to use the mobile telephone in the driver's cab, but her cousin received no call.

The owner of the Ashburn Hotel in Fordingbridge, where Miss Figard's cousin worked, described her yesterday as a "charming girl". Gary Robson said: "Celine is a polite, well-brought up and good-mannered girl. Everyone at the hotel is terribly shocked and upset that she has gone missing. We are hoping for the best."



Bernard Figard praised the police, top, shown searching a field beside the A303, south of where Celine Figard was last seen, for their efforts in trying to trace his daughter, who had been hitch-hiking to visit her cousin



## Missing A-level pupil 'victim of bullying'

By BILL FROST

A MISSING sixth-former whose belongings were found beside a cliff had been the victim of bullying at school, his father said last night.

Unknown to his parents, 18-year-old Andrew Smith had stayed away from school for three weeks before his disappearance. He was last seen on December 11. Two days ago, his bicycle and backpack were discovered, hidden near the Old Harry Rocks at Swanage, Dorset.

The teenager, who has 11 GCSEs, was studying for four A levels and an AS level at Poole Grammar School. He hoped to become an airline pilot. As police renewed their search for him yesterday, Ken Smith, 55, his father, said: "Until we get him back, we won't know for certain, but we are 99 per cent sure he has gone because of pranks and verbal abuse at school. From what we have learnt since Andrew went missing, it has been going on for about six months."

"Apparently a group of about five or six so-called mates were involved. They would do things like go to a party together and thought it was then a great idea to order a taxi but leave Andrew to make his own way home from about five miles away."

"He never spoke to us about it. Andrew is a very sensitive boy and this upset him. It never took much for him to burst into tears so he took the bullying very much to heart."

"He had been skipping school for about three weeks before he went missing, but we had no idea until we got a letter from the school telling us about it. He used to leave home as if everything was normal, but never actually arrived at school, and then come home in the evenings as if he had been there all day. On the day he left he seemed perfectly normal and didn't say anything to give us concern. The school have denied bullying goes on inside their gates but I know differently."

Sally Smith, 45, the teenager's mother, said: "We have spent the whole of Christmas just holding each other and crying." Like her husband, she hopes that their son is living rough, possibly in a beach hut or staying with a friend.

The parents are to appeal for their son on breakfast television today.

Extensive police searches using divers and tracker dogs have failed to produce any indication of his whereabouts. Yesterday a fresh search was started and a coastguard helicopter was brought in. A police spokesman said: "We are very worried about Andrew. He has never done anything like this before and there is great concern for his safety."

No spokesman for Poole Grammar School was available to comment on the teenager's disappearance last night.



Andrew Smith: hoped to become airline pilot

## Shoppers extend Christmas break in rush to sales

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE lure of the sales kept much of the nation away from work yesterday as bargain-hunters went on a shopping spree instead.

With more winter sales opening on the same day than ever before, crowds headed for out-of-town shopping malls or city centre stores rather than to work.

Even with fewer commuter trains than normal, most of the carriages were half empty in what should have been the rush hour. "We expected 60 per cent of normal weekday traffic," a spokesman for the London-Tilbury-Southeast line said, "but we have probably got less than half. The trains only got busier off-peak, as people went shopping."

London Underground ran a

modified Saturday service, and found that the busiest stations were those closest to the shops.

Mike Lampert, of the West Anglia Great Northern Railway, said: "The City is supposed to be working so we are running a full service, but we have had nothing like a full turnout. Only about 60 per cent of the normal number have travelled, and quite a lot were going shopping."

In the City of London, many of the banks and stock-brokers reported a quiet day, with employees extending their Christmas break into the new year. The FT-SE 100 index managed an 18.1 point rise in a day which saw one of the lowest trading volumes of the year, with fewer than 300 million shares traded. Many of the traders who did come into the office promptly went

out for a long lunch, making a better-than-expected day for City watering holes.

AA Roadwatch said there had been no rush-hour traffic jams, adding: "The only congestion has been concentrated around shopping centres, which have been very, very busy."

In Newcastle upon Tyne, the brothers John and David Fowler had camped outside Barker and Stonehouse since Christmas Day to secure a two-sofa set in peach leather reduced from £2,265 to £95.

But sub-zero temperatures and some overnight snow limited early morning queues outside the West End stores in London. People started arriving at Selfridges in Oxford Street only 30 minutes before opening time, but when the doors opened at 9am, the managing director, Tim Dan-

iels, claimed there were 600 waiting outside. The biggest rush was to the men's designerwear department, which remained one of the busiest areas of the shop throughout the day.

By noon, the store had taken £1 million, 19 per cent up on last year's midday figure. Mr Daniels said it appeared that the number of shoppers on Oxford Street was up by a fifth on last year.

"People are going for better quality merchandise," a store spokeswoman added, "spending more money and being more discriminating."

In general, shop-floors only filled with bargain hunters at about 10.30am, by which time security men were stationed at some escalators to ensure they did not become so crowded as to be unsafe.

As pressure on changing

rooms built up, suited gents threw modesty to the winds and dropped their trousers behind racks of overcoats so that they could seek their wives' approval for new outfits. In the ladies' departments, women bearing armloads of hangers mercilessly pushed open doors and curtains concealing rival shoppers in states of semi-nudity.

"It has been very hectic," said a spokeswoman at Fenwick in Bond Street, "but we do like our customers to retain a sense of decorum."

In Bristol city centre, car parks were full before the shops opened. Peter Tregellas, manager of the local Debenhams, said trade was 15 per cent up on last year.

At the MetroCentre on Tyneside, the biggest shopping complex in Europe, queues began forming more than two hours before opening time. The malls were opened early to let people in from the cold, and 7,000 flocked through the doors in the first half-hour. The car parks were full before 11am, but shoppers continued to arrive at the same pace throughout the day. "We have certainly matched last year, and possibly exceeded it," the centre's spokesman said.

Jackie Moores, manager of Manchester's 150-store Arndale Centre, said shoppers had braved temperatures of -4C. "There are a lot of people about for fashions, footwear, and sportswear," she said. "Only we retailers seem to be working."

### BARGAIN-HUNTER'S CHECKLIST

LONDON

Burberry: ladies classic raincoat reduced from £395 to £235; men's trenchcoat from £525 to £295.

Fenwick: Nicole Farhi satin jackets reduced from £199 to £99; John Smedley crew neck sweaters from £65 to £31.95; Fenn, Wright and Manson silk shirts from £115 to £55.

Gieves & Hawkes: business suits reduced from £495 to £245; cashmere sweaters from £450 to £195 and tweed jackets £350 to £150.

Heal's: handmade Avon bed reduced from £2,495 to £1,870; Trent oak sideboard from £1,295 to £885; curtain and upholstery fabrics from £3 a metre.

Liberty: Issy Miyake and Yohji Yamamoto fashions up to two-thirds off; Persian Bidjar Kelim rug reduced from £450 to £225.

Selfridges: Blancpain men's watch reduced from £79,000 to £50,378; 1.5 litres of Shalimar eau de toilette, reduced from £2,500 to £1,250; Maxmara women's suit reduced from £305 to £152; Betty Jackson jackets from £315 to £157; Hugo Boss, Nicole Farhi and YSL fashions up to 50 per cent off; large sofa in selected hide reduced from £2,049 to £1,019; Persian hand-made rugs from £799 to £399.

Simpson: men's Daks suits

down from £299 to £149; jackets from £219 to £109 and trousers from £79 to £39. Ladies' Daks jackets from £229 to £159. Berri Barclay trouser suit from £238 to £148; Louise Kennedy suits from £484 to £328.

NATIONWIDE

Austin Reed: men's wool suits down from £279 to £199; women's winter coats from £279 to £139.

Bally: 40 per cent off autumn and winter shoes.

Currys: Sony 29in Surround Sound television with Fastext plus 4-head Nicam stereo video with VideoPlus at £1,299, saving £200.

Dixons: Sony TR680 Hi8 hi-fi stereo camcorder reduced from £999.99 to £699.99; Canon Epoca 35mm zoom camera from £349.99 to £199.99; Grundig GT2105 21in Nicam television was £399.99, now £299.99.

Habitat: solid beech table reduced from £399 to £279; sofa and armchair reduced from £1,448 to £1,158.

House of Fraser: Argenteum sterling silver cutlery 60-piece canteen reduced from £3,999 to £1,999; Sony TV/video was £699, now £499; a Relyon Royal packer-sprung mattress was £1,095, now £595.

Kendals, Manchester: Ralph Lauren wool dress was £580, now £290.

## 'Wrap up the whole store — I'll take it'

By ROBIN YOUNG

ONE delighted shopkeeper claimed yesterday that an Arab sheikh had purchased almost the entire contents of his London store for £350,000 to give his third wife.

Martin Barnett, owner of a West End soft furnishings and embroidery shop, said that the sheikh, who did not want to be named, had been vouched for by Hamad bin Ali al-Thani, a member of the Qatari royal family, with whom Mr Barnett says he runs a shop in

Doha. Mr Barnett said the sheikh's intention was to recreate the Edgware Road store to please his wife.

He said the sheikh's shopping list included two computerised embroidery machines at £40,000 each, 150 hand-made sofas at £500 each and 150 matching chairs at £300. He added: "The sheikh saved himself at least £200,000 by buying in the sale. We still have enough stock to continue in business."



Martin Barnett outside his shop: a £350,000 sale

Cellnet and Vodafone think it should be 68p to listen to a 1 minute message,

Orange think it should be

9p.

Another reason why, on average, Orange users save £20 every month.





## Message to middle-aged: forget the jog, just skip the pudding

By NIGEL HAWKES  
SCIENCE EDITOR

MIDDLE-AGED men feeling the effects of the festive season weighing heavily upon them would be better advised to diet than to take up jogging.

An American study has shown that both courses of action are helpful, but that weight loss has substantially more benefits than exercise alone. A team from the University of Maryland studied 111 overweight men between the ages of 46 and 80. They were split

into three groups: 44 were told to lose 10 per cent of their body weight, 49 were told to exercise without losing weight, while the other 18 went on as before and served as controls. The trial lasted nine months.

Dr Leslie Katzel and his colleagues report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that the weight-loss and the exercise group had both benefited. Their levels of low density lipoprotein cholesterol — the so-called "bad" cholesterol that increases the risks of heart attacks — were

down. So were levels of plasma triglycerides — fats found in the blood — and insulin. Both are indicators of coronary disease.

But the weight-loss group did significantly better. Not only were their decreases in glucose and insulin levels greater and their blood pressure lower, but they also showed gains in high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, the beneficial variety that cuts the risk of heart disease.

The older men found it harder to lose the weight, and did not gain as great a benefit. But the

message is clear. All other things being equal, overweight and sedentary men should first think about losing weight. Dr Katzel concludes: "Collectively, these results suggest that weight loss is the preferred treatment to improve coronary artery disease risk factor profiles in healthy, overweight, sedentary, middle-aged and older men."

Another study published in the journal shows that lowering blood pressure in middle-age can have even greater benefits, enabling men to retain mental

vigour into old age. The reason is that high blood pressure may cause many tiny "silent" strokes that have no obvious symptoms but can permanently impair memory and thinking ability, the scientists responsible believe.

Dr Lenore Launer, of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment in The Netherlands, carried out a study with colleagues from the University of Hawaii and the US National Institute on Ageing. They returned to a group of Japanese-American men original-

ly enrolled in a heart study in the 1960s, when they were middle-aged. They now have an average age of 78.

The team examined their ability to remember, to think abstractly, to make judgments and to concentrate. They found that those with a high systolic blood pressure — the first of the two figures in a blood pressure reading — in middle age were almost two and a half times more likely to have poor cognitive function in old age than those with a low systolic pressure.

For every 10-point increase in

systolic blood pressure, there was a 9 per cent increase in the risk of poor cognitive function later in life. High systolic pressure was defined as more than 160, low as less than 110. A normal systolic reading is about 120.

A gap between the sexes is narrowing on those classes as heavy smokers. Figures from the Advertising Association show 9 per cent of women admit to smoking more than 20 a day compared with 12 per cent of men. In 1982, the figures were 11 per cent for women and 18 for men.

## Minister to issue pledge on release of the mentally ill

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A CHARTER for the mentally ill is to be announced by Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, in an attempt to allay public concern over violent attacks by patients released into the community.

The charter, to be issued for consultation in the new year, will include the guarantee that patients will not be discharged from hospital if it is thought that there could be the slightest risk to cars, relatives or the public. Patients who are sent home will be able to get home visits from nurses or social workers within four hours in urgent cases.

Yesterday a charity for the homeless blamed a shortage of hospital beds for increasing numbers of mentally ill people being forced on to the streets this Christmas. The charity, Crisis, is providing 480 beds for the homeless in London this week, the biggest programme it has run. Its director, Martin Southern, said the charity was helping more mentally ill people because "the people who ten years ago would have expected to go into hospital don't get that far and fall out of the system. There is a shortage of beds."

Mr Dorrell is anxious to quell public fears that the policy of care in the community is leading to attacks by the mentally ill. Highly publicised cases such as the murder of Jonathan Zito by Christopher Clunis at a Lon-

don Tube station in 1992 have caused widespread concern. There have been other tragedies since, and in August, Gerald Malone, the Health Minister, told NHS chairman to improve care-in-the-community standards and report back to the Secretary of State. He is due to announce the outcome shortly.

The danger is that the policy will be seen simply as one of closing old asylums with nothing effective put in their place.

Yesterday Mr Dorrell said: "When there's comment about the mental health services, people often latch on to the phrase 'care in the community' and say this means the Government is not interested in hospital care, which isn't true. The phrase has become misleading because it has come to imply that the only



Dorrell responding to public concerns

type of mental health service we are interested in delivering is one based on community health and that is not the case.

"What we are concerned to do is deliver a spectrum of care, so that someone who is acutely mentally ill has their acute needs met in a hospital. And that there is care available in a sheltered setting for those who need it, that there is community care for those who need it and crisis teams for meeting crisis need."

"The standard I am looking for as a result of this Malone letter is not caring for everybody in the community, in the one-dimensional sense. It is a spectrum of care meeting health need. What the charter will do is set out what the patient is entitled to expect under the existing law."

Kate Harrison, of the mental health charity Mind, said that the fear of mental patients was disproportionate. "There are 12 murders a year by mentally ill people, out of a total of 700. While any incident of this sort is tragic, the impression the public has is exaggerated."

She doubted the charter would have much effect. "The truth is that there is a dearth of services for the mentally ill, plus a lack of social support and things to do. The Government should provide more money for community care and set national minimum standards, not issue another consultative document."

## Village shop is crushed by kilos

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE owners of an award-winning village shop blame the cost of going metric for having to close. Steven and Sonia Dorward had run the store at Hawksworth, Nottinghamshire, for 26 years.

They had been able to make ends meet only by Mr Dorward, 57, working part-time at a tractor factory. Converting from pounds and ounces to kilograms last October cost them £3,000.

Mrs Dorward said: "We had a nice old weighing machine which we'd just had serviced, but we still had to change. It seemed to me very, very complicated for a little village shop. We tried weighing things beforehand and packaging them, but the customers didn't seem to like it."

Mr Dorward also blamed other factors: "We couldn't compete with supermarkets, and now our wholesale market has been moved and the supermarkets get first choice from the growers." Christine Cameron-Williams, a shopper at Dorward's, which won the Calor Gas award for Best Midlands Village Shop last year, said: "I'm very sad it's closed. It was a super shop and very much part of the village. Now you meet people who have always shopped at Dorward's wandering around Nottingham, looking rather lost."

Mr Dorward has become assistant manager at the tractor factory and his wife runs a sub-post office at the former shop.



Steven and Sonia Dorward: shutting their award-winning store after 26 years

## Girl faces legal fight over her gift horse

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE owner of a riding centre is to take legal action in an attempt to force a 12-year-old girl to hand over the pony she was given for Christmas.

Becky Murray, 12, spent more than a year mucking out at a nearby farm to convince her mother that she was serious about wanting a pony. Teresa Murray bought her a six-year-old bay gelding for £600 at an auction in September, which Becky named Mistral.

However, Harold Restall, 58, the owner of a riding centre near Becky's home at Audenshaw, Greater Manchester, says Mistral is a Cob pony named Mikey stolen from him on the day of the auction. Mrs Murray has refused to return the pony, so Mr Restall is taking the case to Tameside County Court in February.

Yesterday Mrs Murray said: "I bought Mistral in good faith and Becky was delighted to get her. Now this thing has knocked the sparkle right out of her Christmas."

Mikey, which was used to pull traps and wedding carriages, was stolen from a field next to Mr Restall's riding centre in Radcliffe, near Bugy. Mrs Murray bought Mistral at an auction in Chelford, Cheshire, on the day of the theft from a young girl who was with two adults and three smaller children.

Mr Restall, whose legal bill could be £2,000, said: "It's not the money that concerns me, it is the principle that my property should be returned."

## All change on line that took the strine

RESIDENTS and visitors arriving at Covent Garden in London will no longer find themselves being welcomed by a woman with an Australian accent (Jonathan Prynn writes).

The recorded announcement in the lift at the Tube station has puzzled many travellers as they emerge near the spot where Professor Higgins despaired of Eliza Doolittle's cockney accent in *Pygmalion*.

In pure "strine" tones, an Australian woman's voice begins: "Welcome to Covent Garden station. Please take care of your valuables. She then gives directions to the major attractions. Dick Ensor, vice-chairman of the Covent Garden Community Association, said the voice, used since the spring, had been questioned at a meeting with London Underground.

A Tube spokeswoman said the message

was being changed to include more information, not because of the accent. She added: "A contractor doing lift work had an Australian woman in their employ and we were happy for her to be the voice. We do not agree that all announcements should be in middle-class, standard English accents."

"We do have a certain amount of ethnic representation in our workforce."

# I'M A LOYAL MONARCHIST SAYS AUSTRALIAN PM

Until then, there's Glenfiddich to enjoy.



## Astronaut's heels may hold clue to osteoporosis

By NIGEL HAWKES  
SCIENCE EDITOR

SCIENTISTS are waiting for a German astronaut to return from space with clues to the problem of osteoporosis.

For the past three months Thomas Reiter has had his heel tapped by a device designed to simulate walking. In each ten-minute session it is tapped 500 times on a spring-loaded exercise machine designed by researchers at Bath University.

The machine is the brainchild of Allen Goodship and Paul Dieppe, professors at Bristol University, who believe the regular impact of the heel on a pavement is the missing ingredient in space exercise regimes. Astronauts can tone muscles by daily exercise on a bicycle or rowing machine but there has been no equivalent for the bones.

In space, they tend to lose mass in a process similar to osteoporosis. Astronauts can lose 10 per cent of bone mass during a lengthy mission, as bone responds to the forces on it. When these are low, in the weightlessness of space, it tends to wither away.

Professor Goodship measured the astronaut's bone density at Star City, near Moscow, before lift-off. During the mission his bones are also being routinely measured by ultra-sound scanners. When he returns to earth in a few weeks, Professor Goodship hopes to examine the astronaut's bones again.

Only one leg has been subjected to the heel-tap routine, and its bone mass will be compared with the other leg.

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Salford plans to transform its industrial past into monument to a working-class hero

# Lowry's forgotten works to emerge in £75m tribute

By Bill Frost

ALMOST two decades after the death of L.S. Lowry, the world's largest collection of his paintings and sketches is at last to be given pride of place by the city he immortalised in his work.

Salford's most famous son will be celebrated in a £75 million arts centre bearing his name. The centrepiece of the project will be a purpose-built gallery for more than 300 of his depictions of working-class life in the North West.

Salford Art Gallery, which owns the collection, has had to keep dozens of sketches and paintings in a cramped basement. Financial constraints and shortage of space prevented the display of any more than half the paintings. In addition, no catalogue of his work exists and an archive of tape-recordings, photographs and letters documenting the artist's life languishes in a cupboard.

This "parlous state of affairs", as Lowry's friends and life-long collectors describe it, will be rectified by the project to transform Salford Quays, an area that once bustled with the industrial scenes that were the artist's inspiration.

As the development plans took shape last year, Mike Leber, senior curator at Salford Art Gallery, which bought its first Lowry in 1936, said the new centre "could not be built soon enough". He added: "Salford has been in an embarrassing situation for years in that it owns a collection of national importance, but has had other spending priorities."

Mr Leber said the Victorian art gallery was not appropri-



Lowry: his paintings are kept in a basement

ate to house a national collection in perpetuity. "It is difficult to control heating and lighting. Several pictures have been on display for 40 years and we cannot show as many as we would like. Access to our Lowry archive is virtually zero because we have no space and too few staff."

A substantial injection of National Lottery cash is expected to be announced within weeks to allow building work to start at Salford Quays. The centre, and other developments taking the total investment to £180 million, is said to be Britain's first purpose-built development to combine performing and visual arts. In addition to the gallery for 350 Lowry works and another for touring exhibitions, it includes a fixed-seat theatre for 1,650 and a 400-seat flexible theatre, a "hands-on" children's gallery and a national virtual reality centre to provide training for industry.

The Millennium Commission has already approved the

Lowry Centre scheme, and planners are now expecting the endorsement of the Arts Council and National Heritage Memorial Fund.

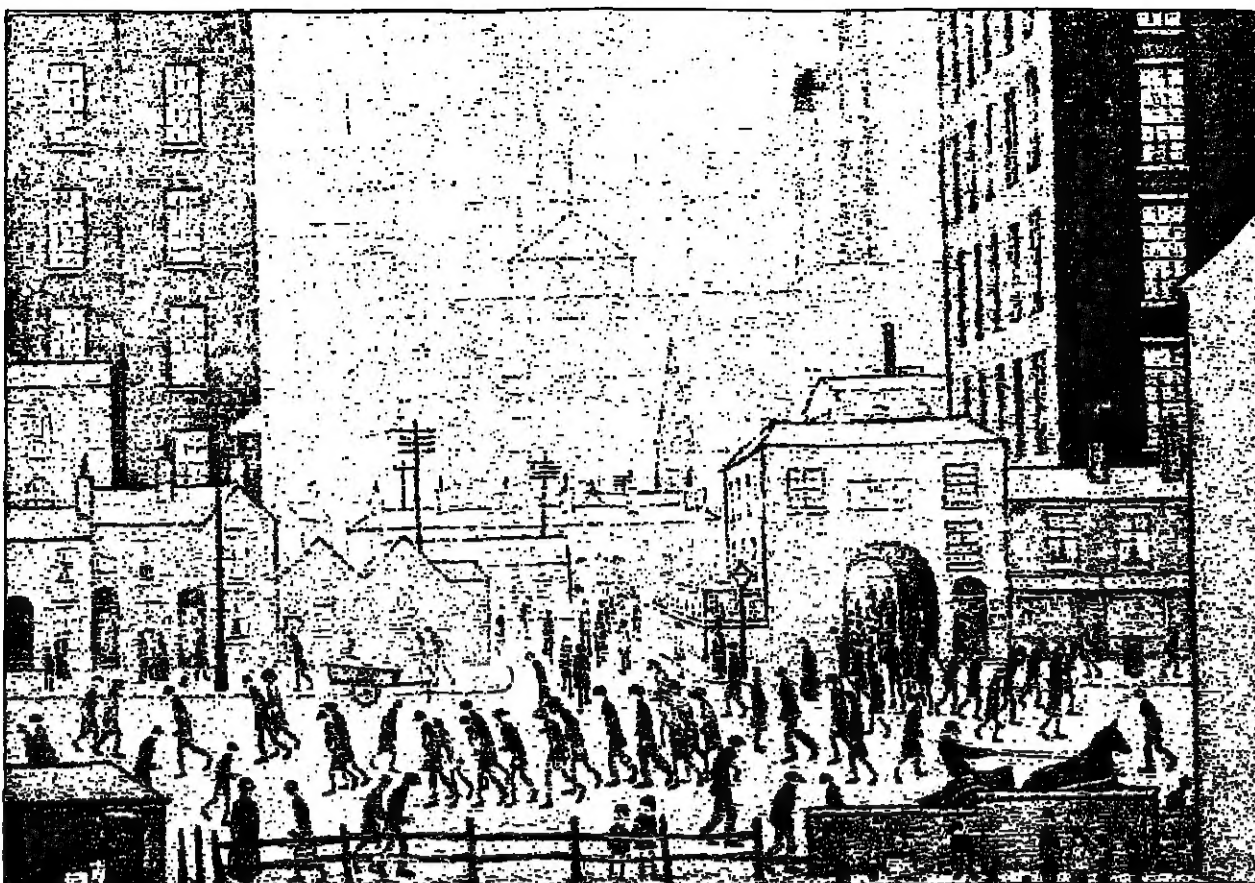
Bill Hinds, leader of Salford City Council, which has led the project, said: "The waterfront at Salford is a step away from the transformation which cities such as Baltimore, Boston and Toronto have realised. I believe the arts should be accessible to all and that the centre will transform the culture and the economy of the North West."

The centre's backers are hoping for £45 million from the National Lottery. It is hoped the complex will generate £10 million from an expected 700,000 visitors each year, and provide an extra £4 million a year in local income.

Supporters of the project include the Oscar-winning actor Ben Kingsley, who began his career in Salford. "There is a great deal of talent in the North West of England and the Lowry Centre will be the focus for their aspirations," he said. "As a former Salford Player, I can imagine the excitement and enthusiasm that this project will bring."

Albert Finney, another of the city's famous sons, said: "This imaginative project has my wholehearted support. Not just the city of Salford and the great North West, but the arts in Britain generally will benefit from this terrific concept."

The actor Robert Powell, another supporter of the project, said: "The Lowry Centre is a remarkable idea in a remarkable setting. Salford never fails to amaze: first the canal, then the quays, now this superb project which will inspire generations to come."



Coming from the Mill (detail). Chronicler of Lancashire working life, Lowry kept his own employment a secret

## Vision woven from a spinning mill

FOR much of his life Laurence Stephen Lowry feared that he would be regarded as an amateur if his public discovered that he worked as chief clerk to a rent collection company (Bill Frost writes). He sought recognition as a serious artist and not until his death in 1976 were his admirers told of his nine-to-five job in Manchester.

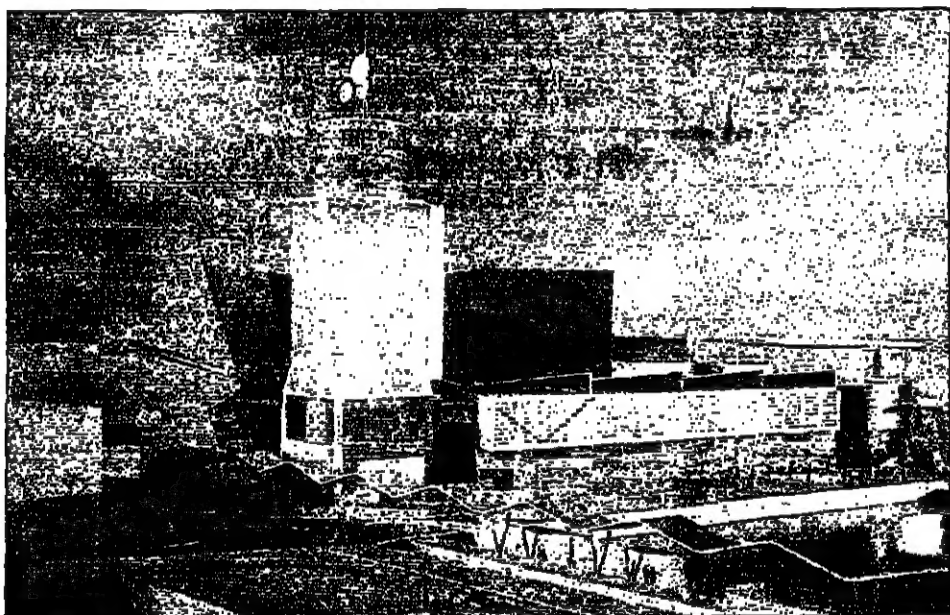
While taking evening classes at the Salford School of Art in 1915, he "discovered" the industrial backdrop which was to provide him with his

sometimes bleak but always poetic inspiration. Sir John Rothenstein, author of *Modern English Painters*, wrote: "One day he missed a train at Pendlebury and, as he left the station, he saw the Acme Spinning Mill... he experienced an earthly equivalent of some transcendental revelation."

Lowry cultivated the role of eccentric, wearing the same mackintosh and cap in the 1970s that he wore for his celebrated self-portrait in 1925. In the small front room of his Salford home

were clocks showing different times. "I don't want to know the real time," he explained. His taste in art was catholic. The Impressionists exerted a strong lure and he amassed a collection of Pre-Raphaelite drawings by Rossetti.

According to some critics, the greatest hindrance he faced was public fondness for his work. Shelley Ronde, author of *A Private View: L.S. Lowry*, said: "He is far too popular for the art establishment. They should have put up a purpose-built gallery when he died."



The proposed Lowry Centre hopes to attract £45 million in lottery funding

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Readers are also offered Ski-Link, a special package for ski-drivers for a car and two people, starting at £125 for up to ten days and £135 for up to 17 days. Additional passengers are £27 and £32 (children £15 and £16) respectively. It saves you 10% on normal prices and includes AA Five Star Roadside Assistance Cover and Home and Overseas Personal Insurance with winter sports cover.

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Cabin or restaurant accommodation is compulsory on Southampton-Cherbourg overnight crossings; 24-hour inside cabin £25, no living seat £5

## Vermeer exhibition beats US shutdown

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON'S museums and federal offices remained silent yesterday as the partial government shutdown stretched into a record twelfth day. But there was one exception: using private funds, the Smithsonian Institution reopened the National Gallery of Art's unprecedented Johannes Vermeer exhibition.

The exhibition is the first devoted to the 17th-century Dutch master and boasts 21 of his 35 known paintings, whose owners include the Queen. "Given the uncertainty of when it [the shutdown] will end, we decided to do what we could to make this once-in-a-lifetime event accessible to people from all over the world," Earl Powell, the gallery's director, said.

Tens of thousands of people have bought advance tickets and have planned special visits to Washington. The exhibition opened to huge acclaim on November 12 but was almost immediately closed by the first six-day government shutdown. It briefly reopened, but was closed again when the present shutdown began on December 16. It must close for good on February 11 ready for shipment to The Hague.

The gallery has taken \$30,000 (£20,000) from its Fund for International Exchange to pay for 25 guards for a week. It hopes the shutdown will end by then, an optimism that could prove unfounded. Talks to resolve America's budget crisis resumed yesterday but with little chance of a quick breakthrough.



# Schools threatened by violence turn to police for advice

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

SECONDARY schools should seek police advice on potential flashpoints in their local community and assess security arrangements to protect staff and students, head teachers will be told next month.

The Secondary Heads Association has hired a former assistant chief constable to supply schools with security advice after a series of violent incidents, including the murder of Philip Lawrence outside a northwest London school.

Ken Cooper, a security consultant and retired member of the Northamptonshire force,

will advise all schools to work with police to produce a "threat assessment" database, covering problems in the community that could affect the school, as well as identifying internal security issues.

The association is responding to widespread concern over school security, fuelled by highly publicised incidents such as the fatal stabbing of 12-year-old Nikki Conroy at a Cleveland school last year. Mr Cooper's work was commissioned before the death of Mr Lawrence earlier this month.

Mr Cooper, whose booklet

on the subject will be sent to more than 4,000 secondary schools, said: "Every school has got to have a security policy, but it is not just a matter of putting up iron bars. One of the important things, in view of the Philip Lawrence tragedy, is not necessarily security inside the school. The school is affected by the community, and schools should have a database of information with a security threat assessment. If there is gang warfare in the community, it should become part of the school database. By working with the police you should be able to identify these potential threats."

Mr Cooper added: "Every-one short-cuts security because it is the easiest burden to reduce at the time, but unfortunately that can have serious repercussions. The value of damage to schools is quite immense. This relates to the quality of life for our children but there is also a real commercial issue here."

The association is also jointly funding a video, called *What Price Security*, which will be available at a discount rate to schools from the end of next month.

The video features Beaufield School in Corby, Northamptonshire, which has closed circuit television cameras trained on its entrances. Leslie Ryder, of the video production company Focus in Education, said: "It looks at the problems of an open access site with playing fields and footpaths and raises the issue of whether it should be made like a stockade when truly it belongs to the community."

John Sutton, the general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said: "A lot of schools could do more to pay attention to their security. But we do not want schools to be seen as fortresses, they must strike a balance between the two."

## Former pupils hit teachers at party

By PAUL WILKINSON

THREE teachers and a schoolgirl needed hospital treatment after being attacked by former pupils at the end of a school party.

Tony Brookes, 47, the headmaster of Thorne Grammar School near Doncaster, said the incident was terrifying. Ten of his staff were driven into the hall by punches and kicks and had to lock the doors for protection.

The police were called, but the five youths involved, aged 19 and 20, had vanished before they arrived. A full criminal investigation has begun. Police are interviewing staff and the dozens of pupils who attended the evening party last Thursday.

At the party itself, for 15 and 16-year-olds, there was no trouble with the pupils, and Mr Brookes said it had gone very well. But as the pupils left, a group of youths who had gathered outside began rattling doors and shouting.

Mr Brookes said: "Most of the pupils had left, but the youths started shouting abuse.

Two of them came storming in." Mike Sykes, 48, a senior teacher, was punched twice in the face and knocked down.

Mr Brookes said: "He started crawling to the school hall and we came to help him. I was punched in the face, and the other staff were stormed by all five of the youths, who started throwing punches. A female staff member was roughly up and had her coat ripped and a male teacher had his shirt torn off his back."

"We managed to get back into the hall and locked the doors. When police arrived, the gang ran off. No one was seriously injured but we did have grazes and bruises. Afterwards, we discovered that these people had rammed a girl pupil against a wall and bruised her ribs, so we took her to casualty as well."

"I always stand outside these Christmas parties to make sure the children leave safely and get home but I have never experienced anything like this in the nine years I have been head."

## Law watchdog in the dock

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A NEW complaints system that would allow clients to challenge lawyers' fees and increase maximum compensation from £1,000 to £5,000 is called for by the Consumers' Association today.

The association says the Solicitors Complaints Bureau should be more independent and allow a wider range of complaints. It calls for reforms to make the bureau more effective, more easily accessed, fairer and swifter than the

present body, which is funded and staffed by the Law Society.

The association makes its proposals in its response to the Law Society's own consultation paper, which recommends scrapping the much-criticised bureau and setting up a new complaints system. "Clients who have lost money as a result of a solicitor's negligence have little effective redress," the association said.

There is widespread discon-

tent with the present £9 million-a-year bureau, both among solicitors, who perceive it as too interventionist and expensive to maintain, and among the public, which sees it as slow and ineffective.

Martin Mears, president of the Law Society, voiced the concerns of many solicitors when he pledged in his election manifesto this summer to overhaul the bureau and bring it firmly under Law Society control.



Piano practice: Felix Gummer, aged 14, taking the grand approach to studying music at Tonbridge School

## Keyboards silence piano in fight for keys to the kingdom of music

By KATHARINE ROAD

TRADITIONAL piano playing in schools is falling drastically as pupils opt for electric keyboards in music lessons. It is feared that the choice could undermine children's ability to play, or appreciate, classical piano music.

Christopher Elton, head of piano at the Royal Academy of Music, says: "Keyboards cramp pupils' musical horizons. Mozart and Beethoven cannot be appreciated on a keyboard, and it becomes impossible to develop the touch and technique to play them."

Research shows that peer pressure is forcing many children to abandon the piano, with boys especially likely to choose more "macho" instruments, especially those favoured in the electronic sounds of pop musicians such as the Pet Shop

Boys. Dr Michael Boulton and Susan O'Neill at Keele University asked 153 children to choose which of six instruments they might like to play. There was agreement that boys generally should not play the piano. "It is not considered macho," they reported. "Boys more than girls consider the piano to be difficult."

The decline in popularity of the piano with younger generations is shown in a survey published earlier this year by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. While 12 per cent of all adults professed to playing the piano, only 8 per cent of children played. By contrast, the electronic keyboard was the second most popular instrument among children, after the recorder.

Part of the reason is cost. At

the top end of the market, a new Bechstein grand piano could cost £34,000. A second-hand upright piano usually costs £1,000 but in a sale one might be found for £500. Portable electronic keyboards start at less than £150 and digital pianos at £1,300.

George Clayton, managing director of the musical instrument specialists, Chappel of Bond Street, in London, said: "Portable keyboard sales are way up on last year over the Christmas period and this has been a definite trend over the past few years."

"People do not tend to buy pianos at Christmas — they usually wait for the sales — but sales of portable keyboards are much higher overall because they are generally much cheaper."

In schools, the added attraction of the compactness of the

keyboard provides the opportunity for group teaching, which relieves the cost of private tuition on the classical piano. But Mr Wright, head of piano at Ampleforth College, is strongly against the use of electric keyboards for music teaching. He said: "There is a great danger that starting pupils off on the small keys and limited touch of the keyboard makes it very difficult to switch to a piano and be able to produce a reasonable sound. We have keyboards here to help with A-level music harmony lessons and for occasional practice, but I would not dream of teaching on them."

Roger Durston, chairman of the UK Music Education Council, said that a study of the instruments played in specialist music school entrance examinations showed that "we are definitely seeing a drop in the number of children taking up the piano among new students".

Sales figures compiled by the Music Industry Association confirm the rise of the keyboard and the demise of the traditional piano over the period from 1988 to 1994.

During that time, the sales of portable keyboards, parts and accessories have risen by 3.04 per cent, compared with a drop of acoustic pianos by a significant 7.14 per cent. These shifts in sales are mirrored by the changes in relative cost.

The keyboard may have advantages other than cost. Hilary Davan Wetton, Director of Music at Tonbridge School in Kent, said: "The keyboard is no substitute for a piano, but it is a very good doorway to the fun of music in its own right."

## Two men held over attack on widow

Two men have been arrested in connection with the mugging of an elderly woman in the early hours of Boxing Day.

The men, in their late teens and early 20s, are being questioned about the attack on Evelyn Stamford, 83, who was found unconscious and bleeding heavily by the roadside half a mile from her home in Wolverhampton. Mrs Stamford, a widow who lives alone, is in intensive care.

A motorist, who had seen her minutes earlier carrying a bag, found her with the bag missing. It is not clear why she was in the street at 12.30am.

## Teenager dies after stabbing

Two young men were arrested in the hunt for the killer of Lee Marshall, 19, of Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne, who died in hospital of stab wounds. Meanwhile, police in the city were examining closed circuit television footage of the Bigg Market, where a man was shot dead on Christmas Eve.

## Murder remand

Peter Moore, 49, the owner of a string of cinemas in North Wales, was remanded in custody by magistrates in Colwyn Bay, charged with the murder of an unidentified man in September. He already faces two other murder charges.

## Hostage charge

Garry Lynch, 33, of Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, who is charged with unlawfully imprisoning a police officer in his own station on Christmas Eve and possessing a knife, was remanded in custody by Oxford magistrates.

## Trains disrupted

Train services to and from the West Country were disrupted yesterday after a coach leaving Temple Meads station in Bristol was derailed. The third carriage of the Leeds to Plymouth train remained upright and nobody was injured.

## Well read

A book has been returned 63 years late to a library in north London. Patrick Lovelock, 70, found the *Manual of Physical Training 1931* while redecorating. The senior librarian was so glad to see it he waived the £350 fine.

## Cold night out

Paddy Faherty, 54, of Cladagh, Co Galway, was in hospital after spending a night at sea in his currach, a traditional open boat. A search was started when he failed to return on Boxing Day, but he turned up the next morning.

## Twin ports seek ship for historic collection

By IAN MURRAY

PORTSMOUTH and Gosport are trying to buy a modern warship to complete a comprehensive display of Britain's maritime history.

They already have an enviable collection, including the *Mary Rose*, the only warship surviving from Tudor times, and Nelson's flagship, the *Victory*. The last century is represented by the *Warrior*. The ports now want to display a 20th-century vessel as a tribute to those who sailed from Portsmouth to fight in recent wars.

The idea came up over five years ago and was backed by Gosport council, then Tory-controlled. At that stage, the Rotas-class frigate *Plymouth*, which had been prominent in the Falklands War, was available. However, the Liberal Democrats then won control of the council after an election campaign in which they argued that funds should be spent on council services rather than redundant warships. The Warship Preservation Trust found a mooring for the *Plymouth* at Birkenhead.

The mood at Gosport has changed, now that a bid with Portsmouth to the Millennium Fund has won £40 million for the harbour to be revamped, and the two towns agree that they want a 20th-century warship for their collection. A berth in Gosport could be included in the new harbour, with the ship visible from Portsmouth as part of an historic backdrop including the other ships. A suitable ship is being sought, the *Plymouth* remaining a prime target.

## Dog saves dog in underground trap

By LEYLA LINTON

A DOG wearing an electronic tracking device helped to rescue a terrier trapped in an underground maze of pipes for more than 24 hours.

Rosie, a fell terrier, had been out walking with Margaret Everett after Christmas dinner and vanished into a 6in-wide drainage pipe while pursuing a rabbit or fox. Mrs Everett and six relatives spent nearly an hour calling and whistling in vain. They returned to the spot at Colchester, Essex, seven times to look for the dog.

Finally, the owner telephoned the Fell and Moorland Working Terriers Club, which specialises in rescuing trapped dogs. Dave Smith, the local representative, and fellow member Dale Bullen searched for Rosie on Boxing Day. They fitted an electronic signal to the collar of Vic, Mr Bullen's Lakeland terrier, before sending it into the drainage net-

work. After about 30 minutes of tracking the dog's progress, they realised Vic had come to a halt 400 yards from the entrance to the drain. They spent nearly three hours digging 6½ft down into the frozen earth of a field until they uncovered the pipe, which they split with an axe. Seconds later, both dogs scampered into the daylight.

Rosie is believed to have become trapped in a section that was too narrow to turn round in. Mrs Everett said: "I was convinced she had gone for ever. We could not enjoy the rest of Christmas Day."

Mr Smith usually uses the location device to track dogs underground when hunting foxes. Mr Bullen said: "Vic is trained to follow a scent until he finds the source. Then he simply lies down and waits for us to trace him. Rosie barked with joy when she saw her owner."



Margaret Everett with Rosie, left, and Vic the rescuer

## Vicar casts disciples as God intended

By PAUL WILKINSON

A COUNTRY vicar has set his flock talking with his set of explicit nude sculptures of Christ's disciples on show outside the vicarage.

The Rev Toddy Hoare, 47, a former art student and military padre, said: "People are beginning to spark a bit now they've seen them, but most of the comments have been favourable and nobody has suggested to me I've gone too far."

"We are all naked before God. The Gospels tell us that Peter was naked when he fished. God sees us as we are. No amount of dressing up will cover that. Some vicars write commentaries on the Bible but I've made a commentary in concrete."

Mr Hoare, who ministers to eight parishes near Thirsk in North Yorkshire, spent a three-month sabbatical creating the eight 6ft by 3ft panels in his studio, adjoining the vicarage at Krayton.

One parishioner, Gill Mayne of nearby Felddirk, said: "What these represent is beyond me. I don't think there is any necessity for exploiting nudity and especially full frontals. I am mystified why they have been done. They certainly wouldn't be hanging in my church."

Mr Hoare hopes to find a benefactor to enable him to cast the sculptures in bronze. Until then he plans to display the panels in the 17th-century church of Michael and All Angels at Cowesby, "where visitors can look, sit, think and meditate in a quiet place of worship".

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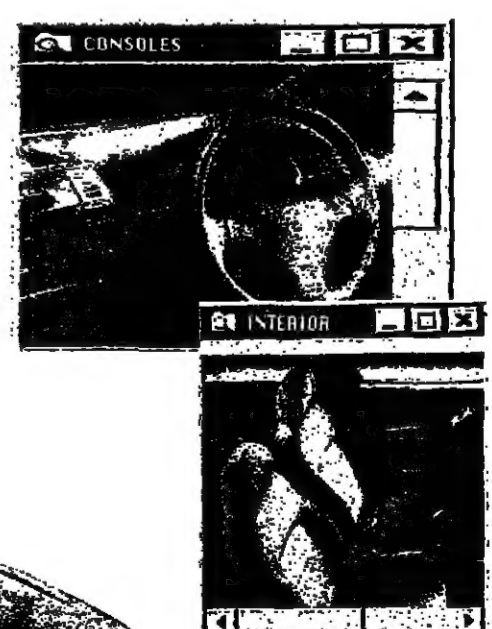
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# Novice spends \$7m to challenge Dole in party race

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

STEVE FORBES, the publishing tycoon, has climbed into second place behind Robert Dole in the race for the Republican presidential nomination.

Since entering the fray in late September, the 48-year-old political novice has poured more than \$7 million (£4.5 million) of his personal fortune into saturation advertising and is the only one of the nine Republican candidates whose support is noticeably increasing.

The latest poll in New Hampshire, site of the first primary on February 20, gives Mr Dole 35 per cent and Mr Forbes 16, with none of the other seven candidates in double figures.

He is untelegenic, a low-key speaker and a purveyor of distinctly unorthodox ideas, but recent polls put him narrowly ahead of the pack in Iowa, which holds the first significant caucuses on February 12. He is also doing well in Delaware and Arizona which have very early contests.

This is galling for Phil Gramm, the Texas senator who has spent roughly \$15 million to date but remains in single figures. It is infuriating for Lamar Alexander, the former Tennessee Governor whose support barely exceeds most polls' margin of error despite more than a year of

non-stop campaigning. Mr Dole is the only candidate who views Mr Forbes's rise with equanimity. He shares the universal view that his closest rival could never win the nomination, but is preventing Mr Gramm or Mr Alexander from emerging as the clear alternative to Mr Dole, thus tightening the Senate leader's hold on the nomination.

Mr Forbes is the grandson of a Scottish immigrant and collects the original papers of Winston Churchill as a hobby. He inherited a business publishing empire and a keen sense of fun from his flamboyant father, Malcolm, who died in 1990 six months after throw-

ing a \$2 million 70th birthday party in Morocco.

Mr Forbes has already spent more on advertisements in Iowa than any other presidential candidate ever, and more than all 1988's 13 candidates combined, but insists that the blitz is working only because his message resonates. While his Republican rivals talk of the need to cut spending and eliminate the deficit, Mr Forbes preaches the old supply-side optimism of the Reagan era.

He would scrap the present tax code entirely, replacing it with a single 17 per cent "flat tax" payable by all (this would personally save him an estimated \$128,000 a year). He would tie the dollar to the gold standard, arguing that inflation and interest rates would tumble. He wants to devolve responsibility not just to the states, as Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, aims to do, but wherever possible to the individual.

Mr Forbes believes that Washington's power and corruption derives from its ability to manipulate the complex tax code. "It's time to remove the dead weight of Washington, and let the American economy run free," he says.

Friends say Mr Forbes is having the time of his life and is prepared to spend at least \$25 million on his campaign.



Forbes: ready to spend at least \$25 million

## Hooligan fans lower Giants

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

HOOLIGANISM, of a sort, has reached American football. Fans at a New York Giants game, despairing of their team's poor performance, started a snowball fight. Fifteen people were arrested, 175 were ejected from the stadium, and national shame ensued.

Owing to the hard texture of the snow, the initially playful fight proved more dangerous than the action on the pitch between the Giants and the San Diego Chargers. Fifteen people were injured, a tele-

vision cameraman took a glancing blow to the arm, and the referees were pelted repeatedly. One ran for cover.

Every time the Chargers looked as though they might score, the air became thick with white bombs, hurled from the Giants' end. One or two Chargers fans were tempted to respond with snowballs of their own. Sid Brooks, a member of the Chargers' management, fell to the ground unconscious when a snowball hit him on the head.

Officials of the National

Football League reacted swiftly. Seventy-five season ticket holders have had their passes confiscated after being identified as culprits and a reward of \$1,000 (£653) has been offered for information leading to the arrest of one thrower, photographed mid-toss. Those ejected from the stadium included a lawyer, a schoolmaster, a retired senior police officer and a stockbroker. Confiscation of a season ticket is a harsh sanction, as there is a long waiting list for membership.



South Korean stock dealers applaud amid fluttering buying and selling order sheets during the ceremonial closing of another year's trading at the Stock Exchange Market building in the capital, Seoul, yesterday

## Gun-toting grandmother wages battle for right to bear arms

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

BEFORE breakfast Marion Hammer decides whether to pack a slender Colt .38 Detective Beretta 9mm. The routine has changed little now she is at the helm of one of America's most powerful lobbies.

"What gun I carry really depends on what I'm wearing and what purse I'm carrying that day," says Mrs Hammer, the first female president of the National Rifle Association in its 125-year history. At 56, the chain-smoking grandmother is a far cry from the liberal stereotype of an NRA member.

The death of Thomas Washington, her moderate predecessor who sought to muffle the 3.3 million-strong organisation's controversial anti-gun control message, has brought Mrs Hammer to join Tanya Metaska - chief NRA

lobbyist since 1994 - in building the most determined and uncompromising defence of the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

"Some people may say I'm a woman in a man's job, but they are wrong," said Mrs Hammer at NRA headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia. "I am a woman in a patriot's job, freedom is gender-neutral."

Just 4ft 11in, Mrs Hammer first shot a gun on her grandfather's farm when five and became an activist after the Gun Control Act was signed in 1968, building a reputation among opponents as "Florida's Number One Gun Nut".

Ten years ago, she was followed into a Florida car park late one night by six youths who threatened to rape and kill her. "They were carrying bottles which they



Hammer: arrived as NRA faces crossroads

were going to use on me, so I reached into my purse and pulled out my gun. One screamed 'the bitch has a gun' and they just fled."

She has arrived in Fairfax at an important time for the NRA, which suffered withering attacks and falling support when a membership letter, sent before the Oklahoma City bombing in April, was leaked to the media.

President Clinton seized on its portrayal of federal law enforcement agents as "jack-booted government thugs" as evidence that the organisation fomented the type of hatred that led to the blast, which killed 169 adults and children. Former President George Bush resigned his lifetime NRA membership in disgust.

But by citing the 1993 Waco siege and the siege of a white separatist Idaho cabin as examples of federal agents running amok, Mrs Hammer and her allies won overwhelming national conference support.

## Chinese choose favoured tycoons

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHINA will name today the 150 men and women it has selected to transform the British colony of Hong Kong into a Chinese Special Administrative Region. News reports indicated last night that those chosen, while representing the colony's business elite, will exclude members of its largest political party.

The preparatory committee will establish the government which will take over at midnight on June 30, 1997, and will also decide how to select the first chief executive to take over from Chris Patten, the British Governor, and also a provisional legislature to assume power from the elected political body China has said it will ignore.

Among the names, a who's who of rich Hong Kong business tycoons are property magnates Li Ka-shing, and Lee Shau-kee, who are regarded as the territory's wealthiest men, according to Chinese sources. The majority - 94 members - were from Hong Kong, in keeping with Peking's dictum of "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong".

Up to 34 of that list were business representatives. Absent, however, are representatives of British-oriented firms such as Swire Pacific and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, and members of the Democratic Party, who despite success in September's legislative polls are regarded by Peking as subversives.

Fourteen members of the colony's 60-member Legislative Council were named, according to the list carried by the well-informed Chinese-language newspaper *Ming Pao*, but these did not include members of the Democratic Party. Former civil servants and representatives from academic, religious and rural organisations are in the list.

Leading article, page 15

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

## Policemen in cult did the killing

Grenoble: Two French policemen were responsible for the massacre that left 16 members of the Order of the Solar Temple dead in France last week, it emerged yesterday (Adam Sage writes).

The policemen, both members of the cult, shot 14 other cult followers, including three children, before turning the guns on themselves. Jean-François Lurans, the prosecutor here, said. The charred bodies were found in a forest on Saturday, a year after 53 members of the sect died in Switzerland and Canada.

## Wei appeal

Peking: China's Higher People's Court is due to hear Wei Jingsheng's appeal against a 14-year jail term for conspiracy today, shortly after a White Paper hailed "great advances in human rights". (Reuters)

## Koreans jailed

Seoul: A South Korean father and son who owned a department store here which collapsed in June, killing more than 500 people, were jailed for ten and seven years for criminal negligence. (Reuters)

## Pole to poles

Warsaw: Marek Kaminski, a Polish adventurer, has become the first person to hike to the North and South Poles in the same year. A Norwegian earlier reached both poles, but in different years. (AP)

## Algiers shoot-out

Algiers: Two policemen, one soldier and two Islamic activists were killed in a shoot-out in Algiers after the militants tried to rob a shop. A policeman and two civilians were injured. (AFP)

## Chemicals held

Amman: Jordan has seized a large consignment of toxic chemicals and a machine for making missile parts bound for Iraq in violation of United Nations sanctions, its Foreign Ministry said. (Reuters)

## Peking declares war on porn

BY JAMES PRINGLE

THEY are thrust at you in central Peking. CD-Roms featuring lurid pictures of scantily dressed women and bearing the words, still rather shocking to see in Communist China, in explicit Anglo-Saxon terms.

Nowadays, pornography is

freely available in the Chinese capital. But all that may soon change. If the Chinese Customs Department is to be believed. Yesterday, officials were reported to have pledged to intensify efforts to stop the influx of "moral toxin". From January until last month, the *China Daily* reported, 560,000 items were seized, up

69 per cent over the 1994 period. In Canton, 1,187 attempts at smuggling high-tech porn were thwarted.

"This dirty media, if not forcibly curbed, could pollute the social environment, poison youngsters and damage social stability by inducing more crimes," a customs report said.

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**Drivers around the US are being drawn to the 'Montanabahns', where the scrapping of the speed limit has raised safety fears. Quentin Letts follows in their slipstream**

A map of Montana showing major cities and highways. The map includes labels for Canada to the north, Idaho to the west, and Wyoming to the south. Major cities shown are Missoula, Laurel, and Billings. Highways 90, 15, and 91 are marked. A scale bar indicates 80 miles.

pay taxes or carry driving licences. At Desperados country music bar on the outskirts of Billings, a ranch hand called Jo said it was "time to chuck ass on the highway!"

Teenage drivers whooped at the dismantling of the roadside speed signs, but one of those early fatalities resulted from a schoolgirl driving past a Stop sign at high speed. Mr Wakefield added that speed offences used to allow the police to pull over shifty-looking motorists. He once apprehended a gang of armed robbers that way. "Now we're walking on eggshells when we stop people," he said. "People in Montana think they have more rights than elsewhere."

"Shorty" Spang, a Ford sales manager in Billings, said that he hoped to sell "a few more Mustang GTs" but at a coffee shop in Laurel, four farmers expressed safety fears. "Modern cars are not strong enough for 90 miles an hour," said Bob Miller from under a broad cowboy hat.

Wild animals are a road hazard in the American West. Deer, elk, moose and wild horses wander freely. If struck by a lorry only the animals are killed, but hit one in a car at 100mph and you will need more than a new windscreen.

straight, gloriously empty stretch of road west of Little Big Horn, the site of Custer's last stand.

Montana's roads generally have far less traffic than the German autobahn or French A and B roads. However, Highway Patrol officers can still issue a ticket to those driving dangerously or with undue regard for fellow motorists. West of Billings are lands once known by Indians as "sacred hunting grounds". Some police still see them in much the same way.

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The police have not given up entirely. Reckless driving is still illegal, and that can include exceeding your car's capabilities. Mr Wakefield wrote out a \$70 (£44) ticket to Mikel Tulp, a student driving at 96mph in a small Hyundai. A bigger car would probably not have been stopped. Failure to slow for accidents or blind spots will also lead to tickets.

For all the safety fears, the new speed code has given Montana a certain stylistic dash. It has increased interest in a state wrongly considered dull, and there is something undeniably wonderful about pressing your shoe to the floor and hearing the pistons rattle at 115mph. Montana has discovered the modern equivalent of the "yee-hi!", dust-stirring stagecoach gallop, and it is fun.

**Letters, page 15**



Quentin Letts takes a break from driving through the wide open spaces in Montana, where he cruised legally in his rented car at 115 mph.

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West Bank city of Ramallah transferred to Palestinians ahead of schedule

## Clinton optimistic as Syrians reopen talks with Israelis

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI and Syrian negotiators yesterday launched a new round of peace talks at a bucolic retreat on Maryland's eastern shore, and American officials were optimistic that the Middle East's most implacable foes could reach an initial peace agreement by mid-spring.

The talks began as Israel transferred control of the Arab city of Ramallah to the Palestinian Authority, completing a redeployment of troops on the West Bank one day ahead of schedule.

The American Administration sees the talks as the start of the final drive towards a comprehensive Middle East peace, and President Clinton said he believed the peace process that began after the Gulf War could be completed in the "fairly near term".

Syria and Israel remain divided on the terms of Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights, territory it captured in 1967, but Washington has been encouraged by recent private and public statements by Shimon Peres, the Israeli

New York: Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, has been ordered to give evidence in an American court over the 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking. A US travel agency which booked passengers on the ill-fated cruise is suing the PLO for involvement in the hijacking, during which a wheelchair-bound passenger was shot and thrown overboard.

Prime Minister, and President Assad of Syria.

The talks broke off six months ago over Israel's demand to keep an early warning system on the Golan Heights to guard against a surprise Syrian attack. Negotiations reopened yesterday at the Wye Plantation, a stately old southern mansion an hour from Washington. The delegations were led by Uri Savir, director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, and Walid al-Moualemi, Syria's Ambassador to Washington. The

talks were guided by Dennis Ross, the State Department's Middle East expert.

The talks will be adjourned tomorrow and resume next week after the negotiators have reported back to their governments. Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, is scheduled to return to the Middle East on January 10.

At the Ramallah hand-over ceremony, Gabi Ophir, the Israeli military commander on the West Bank, wished his Palestinian counterpart success in maintaining security for all residents, including Israelis who live near by.

Ahmed Tibi, an adviser to Yasser Arafat, the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader, sought to allay the fears of Israelis that cities such as Ramallah would become bases for terrorist attacks against Jews.

Editor held: PLO security forces have arrested Maher al-Alami, an editor at the Palestinian newspaper *al-Quds*, for not printing a report about Mr Arafat on the front page, journalists reported. (Reuters)



Palestinian youths in Ramallah wave pistols in the military compound during a brief interval yesterday between departure of Israeli troops and arrival of Palestinian police

## Elusive Golan deal is key to wider peace

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ABOUT 1,800 sq km captured by Israel from Syria in 1967 and held during the 1973 Yom Kippur war has become the key to a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.

For almost 28 years this strategic settlement, known as the Golan Heights, has been a giant watchtower for Israel in the first line of defence against any possible invasion by Syria. As recently as August 1994, Ehud Barak, Israel's then military Chief of Staff, said: "From a military standpoint, the Israeli Defence Forces must retain control of the Golan Heights, even in peacetime."

However, times have changed and Mr Barak is now the Foreign Minister in the Government of Shimon Peres, who is prepared to hand back the area to Syria in return for peace in the region. Mr Peres has made it clear that a treaty with Syria should pave the way for peace with all countries in the Middle East, starting with Lebanon, which is effectively under Syrian control.

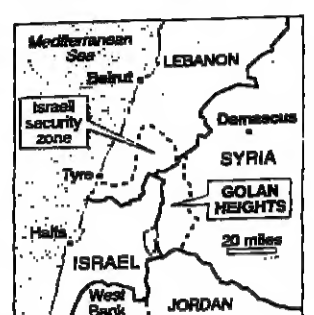
The Prime Minister has said that Israel is willing to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon provided that Syria, which has 40,000 soldiers in the country, can guarantee an end to attacks by members of the pro-Iranian Islamic Hezbollah organisation. For years Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon have threatened the citizens of northern Israel.

Reaching an agreement with Syria will not be easy, and the secret negotiations between Israeli and Syrian officials which began in Washington yesterday are expected to take months to resolve difficult issues, particularly those surrounding the future of the Golan Heights. Syria is demanding a complete withdrawal of Israeli troops to lines occupied by both sides on

June 4, 1967, and the evacuation of all of the estimated 13,000 Jewish settlers in the area.

In the past Israel has appeared determined to hold on to about 60 sq km of the Golan Heights, in order to retain effective control over the shores of the Sea of Galilee, the country's main source of drinking water. However, Syria wants control over all water resources on the Golan Heights, amounting to about 300 million cubic metres of water per year, which flows into the Jordan River and then to the Sea of Galilee.

In previous talks between the two countries, Israel has



also insisted that it be allowed early-warning military stations in the Golan Heights to prevent surprise attacks by Syria. Damascus has rejected the notion of such stations and said that Israel should settle for satellite surveillance of the region.

Israel has recently shown signs of being flexible over this issue and agreement could hinge on the willingness of Syria to agree to a large demilitarised zone along the Israeli border. Israel also wants Syria to reduce the size of its military force. Should the negotiators be able to reach agreement over these thorny issues, Mr Peres will also demand that Syria agrees to full diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.

## Fate of negotiations rests with Arabs' master strategist

BY MICHAEL THEODOULOU



Assad: now a useful ally

PRESIDENT ASSAD of Syria, the Arab world's master strategist, who has used patience, guile and stubbornness to command a leading role on the regional and world stage, hopes to crown a turbulent quarter of a century in power by winning back the Golan Heights.

Arab diplomats say it was the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, that persuaded Mr Assad to return to the peace table after a six-month gap. "It finally convinced him there was a genuine rift between the Israeli Right and Left. Before, he thought it was only a

negotiating tactic," one said. Syrian insiders said, if all went well, the two sides would sign a declaration of principle after three months in which Rabin's successor, Shimon Peres, would commit Israel to returning the Golan Heights. But the withdrawal would not be enacted until after Israeli elections in October. The promise of peace would boost Mr Peres's election hopes without risking a backlash if settlers are moved from the Golan.

Mr Assad, who led Syria in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and nearly regained the Golan, was once described by Israel as its most dangerous enemy. He thundered against Arab moderates, courted Kremlin bosses and

forced the United States into a withdrawal from Lebanon. But his Machiavellian skills commanded respect from his adversaries. For Henry Kissinger, Mr Assad was "the most interesting man in the Middle East". Peace now would guarantee Mr Assad the international respectability he has craved. His transformation under Western eyes from a sponsor of terrorism to a useful ally began when he sent his forces to join the international coalition against Iraq in 1990. The astute move also helped to end his isolation in the Arab world after Syria's support of Iran in its eight-year war with Iraq. Washington made no protest when Mr Assad's troops

crushed the forces of the rebel Christian general, Michel Aoun, in Lebanon which, after 15 years of civil war, was forced to accept a Damascus-backed Government. Then in 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Syria's superpower ally, Mr Assad opened peace talks with Israel. Few remember the Hindawi affair, when Syria was accused of attempting to blow up an El Al jet at Heathrow in 1986, or that Syrian-based radicals were first accused of the Lockerbie disaster. More remote still is his suppression in 1982 of the fundamentalist challenge to his secular rule in the city of Hama, which left an estimated 20,000 dead.

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## Rocket attack on French security van kills guard

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

ROBBERS armed with rocket launchers and machineguns carried out a spectacular attack on a security van in France yesterday, killing a guard before escaping with a large sum of cash.

Two other guards were injured in the attack, which occurred at night on the motorway linking Lille and Paris. Detectives believe the assault might have been the work of a Belgian gang which carried out a similar raid near Brussels last week.

Early yesterday, up to ten gangsters, all hooded and wearing black clothing, forced the van to stop by laying barbed wire at a motorway exit five miles south of Lille, blocking escape with two cars. A witness said they were all carrying machineguns.

When the three-man crew refused to get out, taking

refuge in the back of the truck, the gang blew open the doors with rocket launchers, the witness said. The guard who died in the explosion was a father of three. The other two were hit in the legs, but last night doctors said that their lives were not in danger.

Police said the crew did not have time to return fire, such was the speed of the attack. More than 60 spent shells were found on the ground.

Although the value of the haul has not been disclosed, the van was carrying a large amount since it had been collecting takings from supermarkets around Lille. Officers said only four bags of cash were found at the scene, implying that many more had disappeared.

One of the witnesses was a van driver who was following the security van down the slip

road when it was attacked. "They pointed their guns at me," he told French radio. "They told me to get out. I got out and I ran."

Detectives said the attack could be linked to a raid on a security van on a motorway on the outskirts of Brussels. A gang blocked the van with two lorries before opening fire with machineguns on the crew. The Belgian guards shot back and managed to fight off the attackers. A child was injured.

The guard killed yesterday was the first person to die in an attack on a security van for 18 months in France. However, in a country where the murder rate is higher than in Britain, such incidents are by no means rare. Fifteen people have died in assaults on security vans in France since 1990.



Flash floods swept through the French Army camp at Mostar in south Bosnia yesterday, forcing dozens of Foreign Legionnaires attached to the Nato peace force to be airlifted to safety by helicopter (Our Foreign Staff writes). Major Ben-

### Nato troops airlifted from Bosnian floods

ward Noblet said: "We have evacuated 62 men by helicopter so far. At this hour there are no human losses."

The peace accord passed a crucial test, however, as the warring factions

vacated designated positions along Sarajevo's front line by yesterday's midnight deadline. Under the terms of the agreement, rival military forces were required to withdraw

from about 40 flashpoints. As they prepared to give up their positions on Mount Trebevic, the Bosnian Serb soldiers appeared dejected. "We are very confused," said one. "We've had so many conflicting orders over the past three days."

## Spanish election set for March

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

SPANIARDS will go to the polls on March 3 and either re-elect the Socialist leader, Felipe González, who formally announces the date to his Cabinet today, or—as predicted—trigger the first change of government since 1982.

The general election, the seventh since democracy was restored to Spain after the death of Franco in 1975, is being called a year early by Señor González, whose minority Government has been hit by a series of scandals. It will coincide with regional elections in the Socialist's traditional stronghold of Andalusia.

The main opposition in the Cortes, the centre-right Popular Party, has tried to capitalise on Señor González's self-inflicted misfortunes. But its slender six-point lead in opinion polls shows that José María Aznar, its leader, needs to offer a more constructive alternative than hostile criticism.

The Spanish courts decided this week that only seven of the original 39 people accused of illegally financing the Socialist Party will face trial, while the brother of Alfonso Guerra, the deputy party leader, received his third sentence for corruption.

At his trial on Tuesday on charges of tax evasion, Juan Guerra was sentenced to 18 months in prison, which he is not expected to serve, fined £250,000 and ordered to pay £200,000 to the Treasury.

## Bardot says her crusade to save seals has failed

BY ADAM SAGE

BRIGITTE BARDOT believes her crusade to save the baby seal has failed. In an interview yesterday with the French newspaper *Le Parisien Libéré* she said: "I have reached the limit of my capabilities. I cannot fight against the financial interests."

Her comments came 18 years after she attracted world attention to the culling of white baby seals, being photographed with them in the middle of an ice floe. The crusade began the transformation of her image from Fifties sex kitten to the best-known animal rights militant.

Although white seals are no longer culled, largely as a result of her efforts, they can be killed as soon as they moult, from the age of 15 days. This year Norway has authorised the culling of 17,000 young seals. Canada has increased its quota from 186,000 to 287,000 seals.

"I am 61 years old and I cannot return to the ice floe as I did at 43, especially when I

see the slim success of this type of campaign," Madame Bardot said in the interview. "I am desperate. I thought I had obtained something and it is as though nothing at all has happened."

In 1977 the world reacted very well and was conscious of the cruelty of what was happening. Things have gone back exactly as they were before. Even if they are killed at 16 days rather than 15, they are still babies, even if their fur is no longer white. It is pure hypocrisy. News of the latest culls is a terrible Christmas present for me."

Fishermen say the seals have to be killed because they eat the fish stock. But the former film star said: "It is not the seals which are decimating them, but drift nets and industrial-scale fishing by the Russians, Spanish and South Koreans. We must not blame the seals, who have been there for millions of years and who always eat their poor quota of fish, for what we humans are responsible for."

Paris: France will carry out the fifth nuclear test in its current series today, *Le Canard Enchaîné* reported yesterday. But sources close to the Government said the test was being conducted last night, Paris time.

The weekly said French nuclear scientists had planned to carry out the low-power test in French Polynesia on December 22, but it was delayed at the request of Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister.

The report also said President Chirac was in a hurry to get the sixth and final test over with in January, ahead of a planned visit to the United States in February. (AFP)



Bardot: "I cannot fight financial interests"

## Feminist pirate fails to make a killing at the box office

BY GILES WHITTELL

JUST when Hollywood thought it was safe to go back into the water, a \$120 million (£77 million) feminist pirate epic has fulfilled dire predictions by failing disastrously at the American box office.

Six months late and some \$30 million over budget, *Cutthroat Island* is making Kevin Costner's *Waterworld* look like a model of sound film economics. The new film stars Geena Davis, who made her name in *Thelma and Louise*. Despite her swashbuckling turn as a oft prostitute-cum-buccaneer, it took in a token

\$2.4 million on its opening weekend.

Dismal Christmas attendances were partly due to a critical drubbing. "Like a slow voyage aboard the Pinafore", was the *Washington Post* verdict, while the *Los Angeles Times* bewailed a "weary rehash of every pirate movie under the sun" that might, at best, cure Ms Davis of "her Errol Flynn obsession".

Production nightmares began when Michael Douglas, the \$8 million male lead, walked out, citing a need to spend more time with his wife.

He was also said to be upset at having less dialogue than his co-star.

Tom Cruise, Keanu Reeves and Liam Neeson all declined the role of Calico Jack, sidekick to Ms Davis's pirateess, for fear of languishing in her shadow, insiders said.

The Finnish director, Renny Harlin—Ms Davis's husband—refused to have her part rewritten. Mr Harlin, whose producers had threatened to abort the project, risked his reputation by taking out a full-page advertisement in *Daily Variety*, the trade paper, promising a heart-stopping blockbuster on a par with his previous successes such as *Cliffhanger* and *Die Hard 2*.

Instead he has delivered for the financially strapped MGM/United Artists studio what is known as a turkey.

*Cutthroat Island* was spared the storms that plagued the \$175 million *Waterworld*—its set sank off Hawaii—but was not helped when Italian technicians walked out after one suffered a crushed leg, nor when Ms Davis went down with heat exhaustion and food poisoning in Thailand.

The only believable buccaneer, the hard-drinking Oliver Reed, was fired after allegedly dropping his trousers in front of the director and his wife.



Geena Davis: struck low by heat and food poisoning

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# How a newborn baby could help to save a child's life

A special blood bank offers hope to young leukaemia victims, says Jeremy Laurance

CHARLOTTE Schroder is a one-in-a-million child. The mop-haired five-year-old has bone marrow so rare that the worldwide donor list failed to turn up a single person with compatible cells.

For Charlotte and her parents, the failure to find a matched donor was devastating. She has leukaemia and is undergoing her second two-year course of chemotherapy.

Her best chance of a cure has been a bone-marrow transplant. But this month a new kind of blood bank has opened in Britain offering hope for children like Charlotte. The cord blood bank will hold blood taken from the umbilical cords of newborn babies. Cord blood is unique because it contains a high proportion of the stem cells, also found in bone marrow, which replenish the body's red and white blood cells.

If Charlotte's second course of chemotherapy fails — and there is only a 20 per cent chance that it will succeed — she will need whole-body radiotherapy to eliminate the leukaemia. As a result her bone marrow will be destroyed, which is why she needs a donor.

Because cord blood is immature, it does not require such stringent matching. For an ordinary bone-marrow transplant at least five out of the six antigens (proteins) in the marrow must match. For cord blood, it is possible that a transplant will take with as few as four antigens matched.

Among the first donors to the bank was Charlotte's sister Anna, now aged six months. When Ellen Schroder, their mother, became pregnant with Anna, she was told there was a one in four chance that her marrow would be a perfect match for Charlotte's. "I had



Charlotte's best hope for a donor was her baby sister, Anna, but ironically, her bone marrow matched brother Ben's

the amniocentesis test on Anna early in pregnancy. She was only a half match to Charlotte. Worse, she was a complete match to her brother, Ben."

She knows the best chance of saving her daughter is to spread news of her predicament as far and wide as possible in the hope of finding a donor. The launch of the cord blood bank could provide the lifeline Charlotte needs.

Research on cord blood is being carried out in several centres in Britain, including Bristol, Newcastle and Belfast. But the London bank, which is part of the National Blood Service, and based at Colindale, is the first to begin taking routine donations.

Placentas, normally disposed of after birth, will be collected at Edgware General

Hospital and samples of blood will be taken from the cord. Consent will be sought from the mothers.

The scheme is the brainchild of Dr Marcela Contreras, director of the North London Blood Service. A Chilean refugee, she is a woman with restless energy and a passionate commitment. "Cord blood was wasted," she says. "In using it, the mother doesn't suffer and the infant doesn't suffer. On the bone marrow register it can take three to six months to arrange for a donor. With the cord blood bank it will take a maximum of two weeks."

Only 100 cord blood transplants have been performed worldwide and none has yet been undertaken in the UK.

The use of the word transplant makes the procedure sound more complex than it is. The cord blood, which is stored in liquid nitrogen, after collection, is thawed out and infused directly into a vein. The stem cells find their way to the patient's bone marrow and begin making blood cells. The procedure is painless and takes about 30 minutes.

Initially only children and adults — weighing under eight stone — have been treated because of the small volume of blood collected from each cord. Attempts are being made to grow stem cells in the laboratory, expanding the volume available for transplant. If successful, this could allow cord blood to be used to treat adults.

In the US, the use of cord blood is now an accepted

treatment. The largest bank, in New York, holds 5,000 samples. The London cord bank aims to collect 1,500 samples in the first year and a key advantage over the bone marrow registers is that blood from all ethnic groups will be collected. Mrs Schroder is hoping that a sample will turn up that offers her daughter an acceptable match. Failing that, her doctors may go ahead using her sister's cord blood in the hope that its immaturity will minimise the problems of graft-versus-host disease (GVHD) that can result if the blood is not a close match.

"That is the worst thing that could happen. The child is saved from leukaemia but has GVHD for life, with scaly skin rashes, permanent stomach ache and constant diarrhoea. It's a grim picture," she says.

Why cold turns the thinly clad British true blue

## In patriotic vein

A GLANCE around the bar of the George and Dragon at Cley at this time of year reveals a remarkable number of red faces and blue hands. The high colour seen in many outdoor workers, which is particularly obvious in the winter, is not because of any excessive fondness for Greene King beers, or even something stronger, but because their faces have been lashed by freezing winds blowing off the icy north Norfolk marshes.

In Britain we brave the elements without wrapping up adequately, and our houses are not kept as warm as they would be in Scandinavia or North America. Countries which know that every winter is going to be as bad as it is now in the Shetland Islands are prepared, and their inhabitants have learnt not to wander around in the snow, hatless and wearing short jackets.

The inevitable result of being unprepared for icy conditions is that the peripheral circulation is tested — and unfortunately, in a cold snap, 10 per cent of the British population's circulation fails the test.

A chilblain, the most obvious result of extreme cold, is caused by narrowing of the blood vessels just below the skin. This vascular constriction starves the skin and subcutaneous tissue of necessary oxygen and nutrients, with the result that they become red, itchy, swollen and sometimes painful. Various remedies have been tried, ranging from increased vitamin intake to vasodilator drugs. If any work at all, none works well.



MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttford

Soothing ointments are the best local remedy but the answer is to wear warm clothing, including gloves, to keep the hands and feet dry, for damp favours chilblains. Children and the elderly are most at risk.

Equestrian chilblains, an interesting variant to those found on the hands and feet, are pictured in the *Oxford Textbook of Medicine*. These attack the upper thighs and buttocks of riders, particularly women, whose jodhpurs are too tight. The combination of a thicker layer of subcutaneous fat, pressure from the jodhpurs, and the damp proves too much for the skin of those who venture out on a frosty damp morning.

The changes in response to persistent cold are known as pernio and affect not only the skin, but also the subcutaneous fat. The effect of this long-term cold is for limbs to develop a thicker skin and deeper layers of fat. The girth of the thighs in cold climates depends partly on the length of the skirt — the longer the skirt, the less plump the legs, so that when there is a fashion for very short skirts, there may be some heavy legs in the spring. Likewise there may also be an epidemic of spider veins, which occur when the skin is insulated by a thick layer of fat from the warmer, deeper, more vascular zone.

Older people should be careful not to bake their cold legs in front of a warm fire. The result can be permanent mottling, *livedo reticularis*.

## Toys that are easy to swallow



WHEN I was a casualty officer one Christmas many years ago, two small children were brought into the department within minutes of each other, suffering from severe breathing difficulties.

The same disaster had befallen both as they played beneath their Christmas trees. They had inhaled the heads of toy soldiers — for at that time the soldier's head could swivel or, with a determined pull by a child, the guardsman could be decapitated.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports on a survey of what children swallow or inhale these days. Balloons, marbles and small balls were the objects most likely to obstruct airways, and therefore the most dangerous toys.

The authors of the report would like to see the diameter of all children's toys increased to more than 4.44 centimetres. They also give warning that children are not out of danger from inhalation or swallowing of toys until they are over six. Children over three are, in fact, those most likely to come to grief when playing with balloons.

## Parkinson's drug safety fears



PARKINSON'S disease affects one person in a hundred over 65, and a third of those in that age group have similar symptoms but are not affected by the classic degeneration of neurones in the *substantia nigra* of the brain. Parkinson's can also start much earlier, and is seen quite often in patients in their 40s and 50s.

In recent years, a drug called Edepil (selegiline) has been recommended to delay the onset of disabling symptoms and postpone the need to use levodopa, the drug most often prescribed for Parkinson's disease.

After a trial of 500 patients, reported in the *British Medical Journal*, doubts have been expressed about Edepil's safety when taken with some antidepressants, and also about its possible effect on vulnerable arteries in the heart or brain.

*Medical Monitor*, a journal for general practitioners, quotes a spokesman from the Parkinson's Disease Association who recommends that patients should continue to take the drug, but discuss it with their doctors. Previous studies have not shown any increased mortality in those taking Edepil.

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# Where will you see in the year 2000?

**R**eal partygoers have booked their seats on Concorde, an island in the Maldives or their berths on a 20-day cruise on the QE2. Jon Ashworth reports on plans to celebrate the millennium

IT HAS BEEN hailed as the party night of a lifetime — and business is booming. The inextricable approach of New Year's Eve 1999 has sparked a flood of bookings for marquees, castles, airliners and fine champagne. Seats on Concorde are at a premium for revelers hoping to beat the clock, while a mystery order for 5,000 bottles of vintage champagne has sent wine merchants scrambling for stocks. The millennium looms and there is serious money to be made.

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, knew what he was saying when he told an Arts Council lunch in 1999: "If it is at all possible, purchase an option on any dance hall you can find for the night of December 31, 1999." Six years on, punters are vying for places in everything from Tower Bridge to Wembley Stadium. The Albert Hall has been booked since 1975. Famously, the American-based Millennium Society has commandeered the QE2 for a 20-day cruise at a cost of £300,000 a day.

Party organisers have been quick to come up with bright ideas. Andrew Chance of Chance Entertainment, a London-based party and event organiser, has been taking deposits on bands, entertainers and discotheques. He hopes to host a major bash in London's Battersea Park, and is planning a dance in Norfolk for up to 800 people.

Credit for the most daring booking goes to "a successful UK businessman", who is arranging simultaneous millennium parties in Sydney, London and New York. He wants to charter Concorde in the hope of attending each party in person, racing ahead of the rising sun. "He won't beat the clock," Mr Chance says, "but it'll be good fun." Seats on the trip would undoubtedly command a hefty premium.

William Deakin of Julia's,

another London-based party organiser, says bookings are strong for New Year's Eve in 1999 and 2000, when the 20th century technically ends. Indeed, the whole year in between looks like being one long party. A spirited soul is understood to have booked an island in the Maldives. Others are reported to be eyeing the Palace of Versailles.

Mr Deakin is taking bookings for parties for 200 to 300 people a time at a cost of about £500 a head. "There is an abundance of venues," he says. "What we will run out of first is good entertainment. There's obviously also going to be a shortage of champagne."

Some guests will be flown to France to party the night away in a luxury chateau. One individual hopes to throw a party for 200 people at a cost of £350 a head, picking up the entire £70,000 bill himself.

The Savoy has enough bookings for December 31, 1999, to fill it twice over. The hotel is contemplating holding a raffle to settle the matter. Prices have not been fixed but this year's revelries in the River Restaurant start at £280 a head. Guests are typically treated to Pol Roger champagne, a seven-course dinner and dancing, ahead of a marching parade by the Grenadier Guards. Breakfast is served in the Pinafore Room, before festivities wind up at 3am.

The entire hotel will be turned over to millennium celebrations on the big night. The Savoy admits that there is nothing to prevent successful applicants from selling on their hard-won places at a higher price. A spokesman says: "Entrance will be by paid ticket, and they would have to inform us of any changes." Bookings at Claridge's are running close behind, while requests for the ballroom at the Berkeley are "respectable".



Dreaming of better times to come: the millennium promises to be more exciting than *The Saturday Evening Post's* vision of 1949

One would expect Richard Branson to pull out all the stops for New Year's Eve, 1999, and fans will not be disappointed. Virgin is planning a whole host of events. It tried to hire Edinburgh Castle for the night but the Scots decided to use the venue themselves. More

than 200 people have applied to book the Roof Gardens nightclub in Kensington, London, and Virgin has received thousands of requests from high-flyers looking to charter Virgin aircraft. No bookings are being taken as yet. Celebrations are planned for passengers travelling

on scheduled flights when the New Year dawns.

British Airways has been inundated with requests from companies and individuals hoping to charter Concorde for the "ultimate" New Year's Eve party. Chartering the supersonic jet for a flight from

London to New York and back would cost £200,000 — £850 a seat — allowing trendy revellers to see in the millennium three times in one night. After a boisterous celebration in London, they could board the supersonic jet and celebrate for a second time in mid-

Atlantic. On arrival, they could do it all over again.

Those aiming for the "ultimate" millennium snub could simply fly the other way. They could leave New York shortly before midnight, freezing time en route, then set their watches forward on arrival, missing the event completely.

British Airways has set up a millennium department to sift through all the requests. Some are from companies looking to pamper favoured clients, others are from wealthy individuals on both sides of the Atlantic. The airline is considering auctioning Concorde off, in the hope of raising vast sums for charity. There are seven Concorde in the BA fleet, and three will be committed to scheduled services on the day. Either way, tickets will be worth their weight in gold.

The really serious money has gone to the House of Krug in Rheims, which has reserved 5,000 bottles of Krug Vintage 1985, at £90 a bottle, on behalf of a mystery buyer. The order, worth an impressive £450,000, was placed by a London wine merchant. The bottles have been stashed away in the Krug cellars under lock and key.

Rémi Krug, the flamboyant family spokesman, said there are no plans for a special millennium cuvée. "People who want to celebrate the millennium will be drinking Krug," he sniffs. "Krug is sufficiently unique and different." A customer in Germany has had a consignment of Krug Vintage 1975 in his cellar for the past ten years, with the dawn of the new century in mind.

Mr Krug, for his part, expects to spend a lively New Year's Eve on December 31, 1999. "A friend, a wine lover, who lives in Belgium, wrote to me ten years ago and asked me to keep it free," he says. "It's a mystery invitation but knowing this guy, I know that I'm going to be drinking seriously." The offer is not for sale.

Far-sighted partygoers still have time to put some money aside. GAN Life & Pensions, based in Harlow, Essex, offers a Millennium Income & Growth Bond, which pays out in the year 2000, and would provide funds for some serious entertainment.

Anyone who invested £10,000 earlier this year, could expect to see the sum grow to £16,050 by the end of the term. It may not buy 5,000 bottles of Krug, but then again... Who's counting?

## Giles Coren on the fanatics who'll go anywhere for a ride on a big dipper

If you thought that riding rollercoasters was no more than a cheap thrill to be indulged on the occasional Bank Holiday weekend, and that the benefits of riding one ran no further than a whitening of the knuckles and the evacuation of your breakfast in an inverted loop 200ft off the ground, then you are very possibly an irreligious sex maniac and your marriage is probably in trouble.

For the impression given of the art of rollercoasting in *Coastermania*, a BBC2 documentary to be screened at 4.50pm on New Year's Day, is that, like so many things, it is all about sex and God. In many ways the enthusiasts featured in the programme resemble a slightly more fun-loving branch of the train-spotter family. They are into serial numbers and list-making, they have lost all sense of proportion, and at the centre of their obsession pumps a nostalgic heart for in a world dominated by steel structures, the wooden rollercoaster occupies a position akin to that of locomotion by steam.

But there is more to it than merely riding and cataloguing. The Rev Cliff Herring of Pennsylvania has conducted numerous marriage ceremonies aboard rollercoasters, and claims that every couple so spiced has stayed together. "I think it increases their chances of staying together because they are willing to look at a relationship as something that is not just dull and traditional," he claims. But it may have more to do with the assertion by a member of the Rollercoaster Club of Great Britain that coastermaniacs prefer coasting to sex. One of them, indeed, admits to loving rollercoasters more than he loves his wife. One wonders what these couples, so firmly locked in marriage, actually do all day.

According to the Rev Nick Brakesford of Chapel-en-le-Frith, Derbyshire, whom I caught just before he disappeared on a three-week rollercoasting tour of America, they just ride a lot of rollercoasters. "I have been at it for 38 years," he says. "Since my father took me on the Billy Butlin Figure Eight in Skegness when I was four, I

## The ups and downs of coastermania

even proposed to my wife half-way up the lift-hill of the Grand National ride." That, of course, was in the days before an Englishman could actually sign the register upside down inside a corkscrew.

To tell me exactly how many coasters he had rolled, he had to consult his computer. "Five hundred and eight different ones, worldwide — in Britain,

five times the normal pull of gravity, that one can really appreciate the benefits of faith? "Oh, I don't think it's that at all," he says. "Although I do often work rollercoasting into my sermons, to illustrate the ups and downs and unpredictability of our journey through life."

He finds it hard to explain what makes the experience

front, steel ones at the back). The Moonsault Scramble, for example, is so good that it makes you see black and white, gives you tunnel vision, and occasionally knocks you out. "It gives 5.6 times the force of gravity, six Gs is guaranteed unconsciousness."

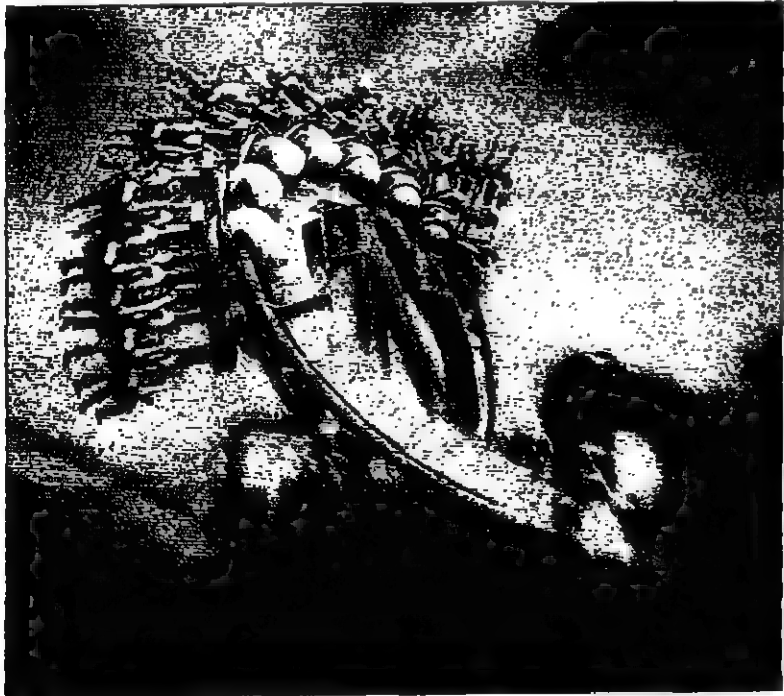
Are the pleasures to be derived here not a little vicious for a vicar? After all, a Mr Glaister talks in the documentary of the "Oh my God, I'm being pulled down into the bowels of the earth by the devil himself feeling."

Mr Brakesford's response is a stock one among dangerous sports enthusiasts: "Rollercoasting is one of the safest forms of transport there is. You are more likely to get killed in your car on the way to the amusement park, than on the ride itself." We sinners, however, are well aware that the two perils are not mutually exclusive.

"Of course, a decent ride should make you grab the handrail the first time around," he says. "But the true enthusiast rides with his hands in the air, moving with the ride, feeling it, not resisting it." And Mrs Brakesford? "She is an enthusiastic ride companion — but she is not so keen on the technological and historical side as I am." Who can blame her? At least she does not suffer the ignominy of being a rollercoaster widow.

The thing about Mr Brakesford and Mr Herring is that they cover their thousands of murderous miles confident in the existence of a better place

to come (indeed, Mr Brakesford wears a T-shirt announcing "There are no rollercoasters in hell"). But for potential punters not so certain of salvation, the words of one coastermaniac on New Year's Day may sound more than a little discouraging: "The ultimate rollercoaster," he suggests, "is one when everybody comes back to the station dead."



Thousands flock to Alton Towers every year for the scariest rides

the Continent, America and Japan. At an average of 20 rides per rollercoaster, that makes 10,000 rides, each of approximately one third of a mile. Which is to say that I have travelled 3,330 miles by gravity in my life.

"I shall cover another hundred or so over the new year — last year we drove 8,000 miles in three weeks to ride 100 coasters."

Expensive? Not a bit of it. As a member of the 5,000-strong American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE), he has a free season ticket to most of the world's great rides.

Is this not a rather peculiar passion for a vicar? Or, on the other hand, is it perhaps only when being turned inside out at 70mph and experiencing

worth having 10,000 times. He talks of the great unique rides like the Scandia Screamer in Ontario and Tokyo's Moonsault Scramble, and how they compare to production-line standards such as the Corkscrew and the Wild Mouse. He explains in terms of out-of-seat experience the intensity of forces in the loop at the back and front of the roller (wooden ones are best ridden at the

**The year of the pig?**  
Geoff Brown on *Babe* and the other top films of 1995

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## Janet Daley



■ Since knife attack is becoming fashionable as a crime among the young, it is essential that some specific step be taken

The widow of Philip Lawrence has said that her husband would have been embarrassed by the adulation which made him Radio 4's Personality of the Year. Such is the response of the hero to praise: it was only doing my job. Mrs Lawrence's description of her late husband as being "modest to the point of self-deprecation" seems of a piece with the rest of his behaviour, which was based on the almost forgotten principle that one accepts one's responsibilities without hesitation or complaint.

Mrs Lawrence has requested that his memory be commemorated in a more lasting way: that society somehow rededicate itself to defeating the forces of violence. Being modest herself, she would not say so, but I suspect that she would like to see her husband's death become a turning point — for all the strength of moral outrage and sympathy that it has evoked to be channelled into a crusade against the mindless urban brutality which now

If tribes of youths carry knives, that should be amenable to remedy

entrenched, it is absolutely essential that some quite specific step be taken. There is an intriguing parallel between the rise of robbery at knife point and the notorious Victorian crime of garrotting. That too became a criminal fashion, provoking enormous public alarm and popular condemnation in the press.

From 1861 to 1863, there had been a sudden wave of street robberies using this peculiarly terrifying method. A gang — usually consisting of three people — would attack from behind, one slipping a rope around the victim's neck. With a force that threatened strangulation, the victim's head would be pulled backwards to immobilise him. A second attacker struck him repeatedly from the front while the first kept watch. A third keeping watch ensured that the whole swift operation could be carried out even in areas that police regularly patrolled.

The success of the technique — which was marked by gratuitous ferocity, not unlike the more savage muggings of recent years — led to hubris. Just as the knife gives Dutch courage to young criminals now, the garrotters emerged boldly from their usual territory of the East End into the most respectable parts of London. So confident did they become that they no longer sought dark alleyways but carried out their attacks in broad daylight — as knife-wielding assassins often do now. In 1862, an MP walking from Parliament to his club in Pall Mall was garrotted in a well-lit spot. None of the five policemen walking the area heard an untoward sound.

Unavoidably, garrotting led to death. One victim's throat was crushed, another died of the wounds he suffered in a struggle with his attackers. As now, the public was enraged and frightened by this apparently unstoppable wave of incidents. Vigilantes who sought out the gangs were apparently so fearful of themselves as to strike terror into passers-by.

The Victorians, less encumbered by class guilt and moral ambivalence than we are, took the steps that seemed to be called for: the Garrotting Act of 1863 prescribed flogging for convicted offenders and the police improved their tactics of surveillance so that arrests became far more frequent. By 1865, garrotting had virtually died out.

Call it what you will — moral panic, middle-class vengeance or a secure belief in the right of law-abiding people to safety — the Victorians had what we singularly lack: the political will to enforce their social values. Without that, I fear we are lost.



Poet Padraic Pearse had a romantic vision for Ireland, but he was executed by the English in 1916

## Death of a dreamer

Every educated person in Ireland knows who Padraic Pearse was, but hardly anyone in England remembers. That is an example of the crass ignorance which made the English govern Ireland so badly for some 750 years.

He does not even appear in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which has room for many less important Irish figures. The 80th anniversary of his death will be this April, what he wrote, what he did, and what he believed in remain very relevant to the future of the peace process and the history of modern Ireland.

Padraic Pearse was a poet, one of the best Irish poets of his time. His own poetry was mainly written in the Irish language, though he also translated poetry from Irish into English. His Irish poetry was itself translated by Thomas MacDonagh, another name which will be quite familiar to Irish readers but is almost unknown to the English. MacDonagh translated Padraic Pearse's poem *To Death*; it has been taken as an epitaph.

*I have not gathered gold;  
The fame that I won perished;  
In love I found but sorrow,  
That withered my life.*

*Of wealth or of glory  
I shall leave nothing behind me  
(I think it, O God, enough)  
But my name in the heart of a child.*

Padraic Pearse was a leading figure, perhaps the leading figure, in a group of Irish people who early in this century had an historic and poetic vision for the future of Ireland. His first biographer, Padraic Colum, defines it in this way: "All his programmes were for the recreation of a chivalry in Ireland."

Padraic Pearse was on the executive of the Gaelic League and editor of its weekly *An Claidheamh Solais* (The Sword of Light). Like many Irish patriots, he was partly English by descent: his father, an Englishman living in Ireland, had been brought up as a Protestant. His deep Cathol-

cism he had from his mother; he did not marry, but shared his home with her, with his brother William — another name the Irish remember — and his two sisters.

He taught himself the old Gaelic language. He believed that the last values of Irish civilisation, going back to the age of heroes, had best been preserved by the Irish peasantry in their poverty: he mastered the language by spending long periods in a cottage he owned in one of the poorest parts of West Connacht. In 1908 he decided it would be more important to be an educator than an editor; he retired from the Gaelic League's journal, and founded two schools near Dublin, St Enda's for boys and St Ita's for girls. They were then the only lay Catholic schools in Ireland. We can best understand his underlying philosophy through what he wrote about education.

"All the problems with which we strive were long ago solved by our ancestors, only their solutions have been forgotten... for my part I take off my hat to the old Irish... their very names for 'education' and 'teacher' and 'pupil' show that they had gripped the heart of the problem. The word for 'education' among the old Gael was the same as the word for 'fostering'; the teacher was a 'fosterer' and the pupil was a 'foster-child'."

"Now to 'foster' is exactly the function of a teacher; not primarily to 'lead up', to 'guide', to 'conduct through a course of studies' and still less to 'indoctrinate', to 'inform', to 'prepare for exams', but primarily to 'foster' the elements of character already present... One does not want to drill all one's pupils into so many regulation little soldiers or so many stodgy little citizens, though this is apparently the aim of the most tried-up of modern systems... The true teacher will recognise in each of his pupils an individual human soul.

distinct and different from every other human soul that has ever been fashioned by God."

Such were the principles of his liberal combination of religious faith, romantic antiquarianism and Irish nationalism. What did we do with this saintly poet? We shot him. He died in Dublin Castle after the Easter Rising of 1916, along with Thomas MacDonagh, his brother William Pearse, and some 17 others.

These are the Irishmen of whom William Butler Yeats wrote:

*Our part  
To murmur name upon name,  
As a mother names her child*

One cannot even blame the English for shooting Padraic Pearse.

William Rees-Mogg

Easter in 1916 came late in April, only a couple of months before the Battle of the Somme. An army which was about to lose 90,000 of its own men in one battle could hardly be expected to spare 20 Irish rebels taken in arms, even if three of them were good poets.

The only solid reason of state for sparing them would have been the public relations cost in the United States, which had not yet entered the war. They were not spared.

Why did Padraic Pearse think it right to join the Irish Volunteers — precursors of the Irish Republican Army — and attempt an uprising against overwhelming British power in the middle of the First World War? Partly because he was a poet; his assessment of the prospects of a successful rebellion was not that of a practical military man. The parallel

is Byron's death at Missolonghi: Greece like Ireland was to win her freedom within a few years.

The early Irish stories which Padraic Pearse knew and taught are full of noble sacrifices, forlorn hopes and the deaths of heroes. An Irish poet of the reign of Queen Elizabeth had written, in Padraic Pearse's own translation:

*Or a barque's crew that a sea hath  
whelmed,  
Or a band sentenced to death,  
Or thralls in Galt's fetters  
Irish under outlanders!*

He thought "Irish under outlanders" as intolerable as Byron thought Greeks under Ottoman rule, or the English of 1914 thought Europe under the Prussian Empire. He accepted the loss of his life as a price necessary for national liberty. In any other context but the Anglo-Irish, the English tradition would have honoured such a man.

When one looks at the consequences of his death, one can see an almost immediate vindication, including one chance but very important side-effect, and a longer-term tragedy. The side-effect may, strangely enough, have ensured British victory in the First World War. David Lloyd George was about to go to Russia with Lord Kitchener on a munitions supply mission. Lloyd George was diverted to Ireland; the cruiser *Hampshire*, on which he would otherwise have been travelling, struck a mine and virtually everyone, including Kitchener, was drowned. Without Lloyd George as Prime Minister in 1917, the war might well have been lost.

For Ireland, the Easter Rising and its repression destroyed support for the moderate pro-British leadership of the nationalists; it led to full independence of the South after 1921, and to the creation of the modern Republic. Padraic Pearse is, in this

sense, the decisive martyr of Irish independence. The longer tragedy is equally apparent. Padraic Pearse gave false respectability to "the armed struggle". His "Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood" is the ideological ancestor of Sinn Féin-IRA.

The IRA has used methods of terrorism which he did not — he fought an open battle against superior forces. The IRA attempted to coerce the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland. Padraic Pearse fought to bring to an end the coercion by Britain of the Catholic majority in Southern Ireland.

The decision to execute him, however understandable in the circumstances of 1916, widened the breach of alienation between Ireland and England which the peace process is trying to close, but with such difficulty.

Yet the greatest tragedy is perhaps that the independent Ireland that emerged was not the land of the Gaelic League's vision, and is becoming less so by the year. The chivalrous values that Padraic Pearse fought for were those of an ancient Catholic peasant land of myth. Those values have just continued to influence Ireland, as is evident in the continuing hold of the Catholic Church, but the divorce referendum shows that even that is now in decline.

The Gaelic League looked back to the Celtic culture of the time of St Patrick. The Ireland they willed would not be an autonomous West Britain but a resurgent Gaelic nation, "an autonomous West Britain" but it was not a "resurgent Gaelic nation" either. Perhaps Padraic Pearse knew that his romantic vision was not attainable:

*I turned my back  
On the dream I had shaped,  
And to this road before me  
My face I turned.  
I set my face  
To the road here before me,  
To the work that I see,  
To the death that I shall meet.*

## Blessings of a bleak midwinter

Magnus Linklater in the North of Scotland relearns some basic lessons about dealing with ice and snow

There is a particular kind of voice they use on the radio for bad weather news. It drops by a doom-laden semitone as the statistics of snow-bound Britain are read out: 4,000 homes still cut off... emergency measures... workers struggling to restore electricity. There is a hint of suffering beyond the imagination. They make it sound like Sarajevo.

Since I am sending this column from the ice hell they call northern Scotland I would naturally like to embellish the picture to describe the flickering candlelight by which I write, the heroism of my wife as she struggles through the snow for our supplies of penicillin and ointments, the remarkable ingenuity of my son who has rigged up a makeshift generator to power the laptop computer while my daughter melts snow to dilute what I shall sip for many a dark day.

It is not quite like that, although we are on the northern tip of Britain, about to embark for Orkney across a leaden sea. We have, it is true, had the experience of shovelling snow-slewed cars out of roadside drifts, applying boiling water to frozen windscreens, and driving 300 miles along single-tracked dual carriageways said to be negotiable only "with extreme caution". We have nursed freezing fingers and learnt the true meaning of "the wind-chill factor", when a gentle breeze on an open hillside acquires a cutting edge like razor wire. But we have also witnessed scenes of breathtaking beauty: snow-wrapped hills bathed in the pink light of morning; a pelmet of icicles beside the road, catching the light of the evening sun; the dazzling white of a winter cliff, fading into a grey sea.

As for the traditional "road chaos", I regret to report that I have been unable to locate it. Far from Britain's snowploughs and gritters being "caught on the hop" as most stories have assumed, in Scotland at least they have kept a remarkable number of roads open and reasonably sanded. The speed of travel, not



The milk and the mail got through yesterday in parts of snow-bound Britain, thanks to deliveries by sledge

surprisingly, has been halved, and overtaking is such a hazardous business that no one attempts it. But I saw no abandoned cars, overturned lorries or ashen-faced AA men talking of "nightmare conditions". I can, however, say that there is a strange excitement about embarking on a road where no plough has yet ventured, and where only a few tyre marks show that you are a part of an intrepid elite that you rapidly acquire a sixth sense about icy stretches and that controlling a wheelpin is actually rather exhilarating. Shakespeare was on to something when he wrote about "wondrous strange snow".

The British like to make a drama out of the weather; indeed, Shakespeare may well be responsible for that. But did we always exaggerate its effects as we do today? I remember — at least I think I do — the ice-bound winters of my childhood, in which snow chains on cars were a regular part of life, and you never travelled anywhere without a spade and a sack of sand in the boot. I don't recall snow being headline news then, but perhaps I didn't read the newspapers. Certainly, in previous ages, deep snow was a routine part of life. Robert Burns describes a journey north to Blair Atholl in Perthshire, through drifts 7 ft deep. In a horse-

drawn carriage and over rutted tracks, it must have been truly a hellish journey, but the poet merely alludes to the weather in a throwaway line.

All we are experiencing now is something called winter, a season that used to happen regularly, but which we have tended to forget about. A decade or more of mild weather has cocooned us against the reality of sheet-ice and drifting snow. As a result, we have forgotten some basic lessons, instincts even, about dealing with cold weather.

In Peter Hoeg's bestselling novel, *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow*, the heroine, a native of Greenland, can

identify 18 different kinds of snow and their characteristics. Her intimate knowledge of icy conditions, almost a genetic inheritance from her ancestors, gives her an extra dimension of intelligence and enables her to survive, while the villains of the story perish.

After reading about Miss Smilla, I recommend that British Rail recruits a native Greenlandic to help to advise on such matters as why the light and feathery *ganik* snow falls as it does, and the significance of the fact that its crystals acquire the shape of a coffin as they get colder. Never again will BR need to blame "the wrong kind of snow".

For the rest of us, it's a matter of acquiring, through bitter experience, some basic lessons about ice, snow, and temperatures of minus ten. Like never take a Volvo downhill over packed snow. The car may be Swedish-built, but driving it without snow tyres is like piloting a pair of skis, only far more frightening. The best car on slippery surfaces is the absurdly shaped Citroën 2CV, whose big wheels and even weight distribution give it a better grip than heavier, more powerful cars. (NB, this is folk wisdom rather than expert information and should naturally be treated with caution.) If you are negotiating an icy hill, never touch the brakes when you have started to slide, just turn the steering wheel gently in the general direction of the skid — and pray.

Always think ahead about what you are wearing and why it's not going to be enough. When you are shopping, remind yourself that you may not be able to do so again for a week. Think seriously about candles. And remember that most things in the cold take longer. You tend to dress slowly and carefully, protecting the exposed bits. You walk delicately. You drive with circumspection. Life slows down when you think ahead.

Perhaps, after all, there is something to be said for the bleak midwinter.

## Battle royal

THE PRINCESS ROYAL is kicking out over proposals for a new housing estate in her backyard. She has lodged a formal objection with her local council after hearing of plans for "an executive village" on the site of a 14th-century mill bordering her Gloucestershire home, Gatcombe Park.

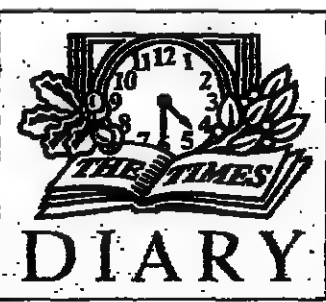
A London-based property developer is planning to build 73 homes on the site of the mill, a former

clothing factory in a picturesque pocket with its own lake. The Princess appears to be baring her formidable teeth in the saga, saying the development is too big and that it could pose security problems. She has appointed planning agents to argue her case.

The company behind the scheme, Hartley Property Developments, protests its innocence. "Without being rude, a lot of the comments from their side do seem to be a little empty," said a spokesman. "Nothing we would do on that site would be intended to prejudice their security."

It is not clear whether Hartley's marketing campaign would capitalise on the development's proximity to the Gatcombe household, if Stroud council's planners nodded the scheme through. But the Princess Royal is laying a good few water jumps in their path before they get to that stage.

While Tony and Cherie Blair soaked up the Australian sunshine this Christmas, I trust they thought fleetingly of the Labour MP for Pembroke, Nick Ainger. He was



among 200 brave souls who plunged into the icy sea for the 25th annual Boxing Day swim at Tenby in South Wales. He wore a sombrero and went in up to his neck.

## Merry men

THE CAMBRIDGE University mafia has dominated the Cabinet in recent years, but a terrace house in Nottingham may come to be seen as the cradle of a future government. The Labour challengers at the general election to John Major, Brian Mawhinney and Douglas Hogg are a trio who plotted their political careers while sharing lodgings as students in the city.

Jason Reece and Sean Harris, both teachers, have been selected to

take on the Prime Minister and the Agriculture Minister respectively. Lee Septon, a local government officer, is challenging the party chairman. "We were all involved in the Labour Club at university," says Reece. "But we didn't sit around the kitchen table plotting our careers on the back of an envelope like Michael Heseltine. It's a coincidence really."

Cops in New York who picked up an abandoned puppy in Central Park the other day are trying to find the emaciated creature a home by the new year. "She's as skinny as Kate Moss," says one officer. "So that's what we've called



Puppy love: Kate Moss

her. We need somebody who's prepared to live with Kate Moss."

## Dumfrieze

A SCOTTISH castle which has taken all that the elements could throw at it over seven centuries might seem the place to sit out blizzards. But the Duke of Buccleuch, whose family was reportedly given Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfriesshire by Robert the Bruce in 1300, is having a disagreeable time.

There was a power cut yesterday forcing Europe's biggest landowner, wheelchair-bound since a hunting accident, to huddle up to a coal fire by candlelight.

"It's bitterly cold. Down to minus 14 degrees last night and not a lot of fun," quivered an ancient retainer who couldn't get through to His Grace, holed up as he was in another wing of the baronial hall where the phone lines were down. "We've had any heating, but the coal fires are going now and it's making a wee difference."

## Bag in hand

THE QUEEN behaved with the exemplary manners of a middle-class daughter on Christmas Day out-

side church at Sandringham. She didn't give two hoots for her appearance in front of the heaving throng of journalists, and pattered happily about with two handbags on her left arm.

One bag was hers, while the other belonged to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, whose two hands were taken up with walking sticks after her recent hip operation. Buckingham Palace refuses to identify which bag belongs to which queen.

There were ungalant suggestions yesterday that the bag-carrying role might be a Princess of Wales-style attempt to exploit the sympathy of the lower classes — everybody would identify with a daughter who carried her trail mum's handbag.

A more plausible explanation comes from the etiquette expert and author of *Modern Manners*, Drusilla Beyfus: "Handbaggage is a very important part of royal iconography," she said.

"The Queen and her mother are very very rarely separated from their handbags. Ladies-in-waiting take parcels when Her Majesty goes shopping but they are never entrusted with handbags."



Queen of the handbags





## CHRISTMAS CHILL

No seasonal cheer for Scottish Hydro-Electric

The Scots are a stoical breed. Used to weather that would make a southerner blanch, they have met the past few days' blizzards with remarkable equanimity. Even in the Shetland and Western Isles, where some have been without electricity for five days, there is a general determination to soldier on. But a new dimension has crept into public discussion north of the border. If anyone but God is to blame for the freezing conditions, it is the privatised electricity company, Scottish Hydro-Electric.

Yesterday Calum MacDonald, Labour MP for the Western Isles, blamed staff cuts at Scottish Hydro for the slowness of the company's response to power cuts. The company has replied by claiming that, of the 20,000 customers who lost their electricity on Christmas Day, 17,000 had it restored by the evening. The problem for the remaining 3,000 was not lack of engineers, but the impossibility of gaining access to remote areas cut off by snow.

Many of those who suffered power cuts had no other source of energy to rely upon. To have one's electricity cut off on Christmas Day, even if only for a day, is enough to test the festive spirit. The prospect of cold sandwiches in a freezing house instead of piping turkey in a warm kitchen would destroy most people's Christmas cheer. But until recently, they would have put the power failure down to bad luck and bad weather.

The difference now lies in the changed ownership of the utility companies. It is hard to feel public-spirited about a company in private hands. When the utility companies were publicly owned, their managers found it relatively easy to invoke a sense of civic duty about, for instance, saving water

during a drought. Now customers look at the huge salary increases of the directors, the burgeoning profits and the booming dividends and wonder why they should have to make a sacrifice to line the pockets of managers and shareholders. The moral authority that once was there has been lost.

Companies such as Scottish Hydro or Yorkshire Water bemoan their fate. They point out that this is the worst weather on the Shetland Isles for 40 years; and the summer in England was the driest since 1727. No supplier should be expected to achieve miracles. Moreover, their services have improved significantly since privatisation. They seem to win no credit, only blame.

Yet the managers of these utilities cannot escape blame for the way in which they are perceived by the public. Since being privatised, they have retained all the arrogance of nationalised industry bosses, while paying themselves the salaries of large private company managers. At Scottish Hydro, the highest-paid director before privatisation earned £50,000; within three years his salary had risen to £231,000, an increase of 362 per cent. At the same time, the company was asking its staff to accept pay cuts.

Private companies cannot expect their customers to suffer in silence. In most sectors, customers can simply move their business to a competitor. With monopoly suppliers, they have no choice, so the only outlet for their fury is vocal complaint. Utility directors can, however, assuage this anger. A combination of humility, contrition and, for the worst affected, financial compensation would warm the hearts of the most frozen islanders. Such an offer has yet to be made.

## BONE-HEADED CHINA

Peking ignores Hong Kong's Democrats at its peril

Peking's allies in Hong Kong like to refer to 1996 as the "year of decision". They are right — for China as well as for Hong Kong's people. Hong Kong is a territory whose prosperity depends on an exceptionally high degree on confidence, an intangible quality which can evaporate overnight. With only 18 months to go before the colony is handed over, Peking's every move from now on will be warily scrutinised.

China has \$25 billion invested in Hong Kong, half its exports go through it, and the wealth produced by this community of only six million people is equivalent to a quarter of China's GDP. A wisely governed China would do everything possible to guard the secrets of Hong Kong's success.

Instead, towards Hong Kong as towards Taiwan, Peking persists in a needlessly and foolishly aggressive stance which has begun to worry even its close associates in Hong Kong. In September, it treated Hong Kong's first free legislative elections, in which Democrats won nearly half the seats, with hostility and contempt. So much for the pledge that "Hong Kong people will rule Hong Kong". In October, it made known its decision to emasculate Hong Kong's Bill of Rights in 1997 and to reinstate laws recently amended or scrapped in order to comply with the Bill's provisions on civil rights.

Today China is due to announce the membership of the 150-member Preparatory Committee, its chosen vehicle for handling the delicate business of the transition. To this committee, chaired by Qian Qichen, the Chinese Foreign Minister, China has assigned decisions of the first importance. It is to advise on laws to be amended or repealed in 1997, including the Bill of Rights. It will appoint an electoral college of 400 Hong Kong citizens, which in turn will designate a Chief Executive to take over from the Governor, Chris Patten, in 1997. On the assumption that Peking unwisely persists in its decision to disband Hong Kong's

democratically elected legislative bodies in 1996, the Preparatory Committee will also appoint a provisional legislature to serve until new elections are held, under a more restricted franchise, at an unspecified date.

These considerations ought logically to have prompted China to appoint a genuinely representative body, trusted to do the best for Hong Kong. Instead, it has indicated that more than a third will be mainland Chinese — and that not one of Hong Kong's Democrats will be included. The point will not be lost on the thousands of civil servants, lawyers, teachers and members of the police force who are anxiously weighing their prospects under a new administration.

Businessmen will not wait until midnight on June 30, 1997 to decide whether they are confident that the rule of law will continue to be impartially upheld. Some are already moving the legal domicile of their companies elsewhere. Nervousness is not limited to Western companies. Earlier this month Larry Yung, son of a Chinese Vice-President and the chairman of Citic Peking's giant investment flagship in Hong Kong, stated bluntly and publicly that there was widespread ignorance in Peking about Hong Kong. China, he added, "could kill Hong Kong" by interfering directly, or by appointing an administration that "bent over backwards" to accommodate its wishes. Citing "real concern" about spreading corruption, he called on Hong Kong's people to "stand up" for the autonomy which China is formally pledged to respect.

Eighteen months from now, the world's cameras will be trained on Hong Kong. On present trends, they are likely to find its elected leaders thrown out of office, its laws in turmoil and its ablest citizens departed or poised for flight. China's wary old men refuse to listen to Hong Kong's voters, who have made the place what it is. But they should at least pay heed to Larry Yung: he speaks from the heart of the Chinese elite.

## FAMILY AFFAIRS

For those born under the sign of Cancer, this should be one of the pleasantest seasons of the year. The particular predilections of this sign are well-catered for by what ought to be the real meaning of the Christmas spirit. For Cancerians are regarded as the most devoted family members in the zodiac spectrum. Their reputed virtues are sympathy, compassion and care for the feelings of others. Perhaps unfortunately for their own peace of mind, these traits are said to be offset by a tendency toward hypersensitivity and something of a preference for emotion over reason as a guide to action.

This picture seems to apply in many respects to the most prominent Cancerian in the land: the Princess of Wales. Her demonstrable concern for the suffering and troubles of other people — and her particular interest in children — are remarkably consistent with the traditional depiction of the Cancerian character. But what goes along with these personality traits is what astrologers describe as a deep need for emotional security and an unwillingness to forget slights: inclinations that could well influence the Princess's future as much as her desire to relieve others' pain.

Official astrological advice to Cancerians for 1996 is to concentrate on their long-term status and recognition, counsel which the Princess will probably need little encouragement to heed. It does not seem inconceivable that other well-known Cancerians such as

Nelson Mandela, Sir Edward Heath and Lord Owen will also be attending to their long-term public reputations.

But it is private life more than public stature that is thought to be the pivot of Cancerian existence, with the family being its primary focus. As this is, above all, the season of the family — the celebration of a holy one as well as the gathering of so many ordinary ones — it seems an appropriate time to appreciate the concerns associated with the sign of Cancer.

The urge to nurture and to give emotional support to others are traits that successful family life requires. Not that the reuniting of extended families at Christmas is always joyous. Readers may feel that, with its stresses and occasional tedium, a family Christmas has demanded all the Cancerian virtues that could be mustered.

The predictions for Cancer for the coming year may be of interest to many of the prominent Cancerians in public life. People born under this sign are promised greater professional responsibility and major transformations in their health. The Princess of Wales particularly may be intrigued to hear that there is likely to be a major change in her domestic sphere. But perhaps the aspect of Cancer that is most pertinent for everyone at this time of year was implied in the Christmas message of the Archbishop of Canterbury: that all births are miraculous and all families, however much at war, are sacred.

## Embassies' role in export success

From Sir Ralph Robins,  
Chairman of Rolls-Royce

Sir, At a time when the budgets and manpower of government departments are clearly under pressure, there is one important area of government activity which I very much hope will be exempted from reduction.

As one of the UK's largest exporters, with over 70 per cent of our turnover going to overseas markets, Rolls-Royce plc draws significantly on the services provided by the commercial departments of our embassies and high commissions and by the FCO and DTI in London. The quality of these services has improved in recent years with overseas posts showing a good understanding of commercial priorities. The support they provide often represents an important ingredient in the successful outcome of an export campaign.

As competition in world markets intensifies, foreign governments are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of maintaining effective representation for their exporters. To respond to this threat, it is essential that the FCO and DTI maintain their highly successful network of support and are not tempted in the interest of short-term economies to sacrifice the export performance of this country.

Yours faithfully,  
RALPH ROBINS,  
Chairman,  
Rolls-Royce plc,  
65 Buckingham Gate, SW1,  
December 21.

## Having a go

From Mr Francis Bennion

Sir, Your report (December 12) that the Home Secretary has asked the police and the Crown Prosecution Service to treat any "have-a-go" hero more sympathetically. His interference is unconstitutional.

The British constitution entrusts the Attorney-General, not the Home Secretary, with the oversight of prosecution policy as guardian of the public interest. For very good reason, the exercise of the prosecutive power is constitutionally separate from the exercise of the executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

Some functions, notably the police, are regarded as part of the executive. Others, namely the courts, exercise the judicial power of the State. Prosecution policy stands apart. That is a vital safeguard, which Mr Howard should respect. It means that governments cannot decide whom they wish to try or courts decide who shall appear before them.

The Attorney-General, in his capacity as guardian, is supposed to stand aloof from the executive. Why has he not stood out against the Home Secretary's presumptuousness?

Yours faithfully,  
FRANCIS BENNION,  
54a Nicodemou Mylona Street,  
Limassol 3095, Cyprus,  
December 19.

## HMSO sale

From Mr C. J. Rees

Sir, The proposal to privatise Her Majesty's Stationery Office (report, December 14) fills me with foreboding.

Fifteen years ago I would have welcomed it, for then HMSO was an inefficient and neolithic organisation, relieved only by the individual capabilities of people within it. In the intervening period its management has developed its potential to the extent that it is now by far the most efficient of the publishers I deal with.

Government departments are already free to seek tenders in the private sector for the production and distribution of their publications. That HMSO retains much of their business must speak volumes for the high standards it maintains.

I can see little advantage in selling HMSO into the private sector unless the Government wishes to see its publications reduced to the level of mediocrity which we all too frequently encounter in the large publishing houses. Multiplying the sources for government publications can only add to the problems that librarians and booksellers already encounter and which in turn lead to the citizen being unable to have access to the very information which government seeks to disseminate.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN REES,  
John Rees Books,  
242 Merton Road, SW18.

## Note of caution

From Mr Nigel A. Brassard

Sir, I think it is insulting, if understandable, that cashiers often subject bank notes to verification checks in front of me. Is it acceptable to ask them to verify the notes that they hand back as change?

Yours faithfully,  
NIGEL A. BRASSARD,  
46 Stanford Road, Kensington, W8,  
December 22.

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Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

## Support for courts-martial system

From Sir Frederick Lawton

Sir, Whatever qualifications the European Commission of Human Rights may have had for the opinion that the British court-martial system had denied Alex Findlay "a fair and public hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal" (report, December 19), experience of its working was not one of them.

I had experience of the court-martial system from 1940 when, as a subaltern, I was ordered to take summaries of evidence, until 1986, when I retired, having been a member of the Courts-Martial Appeal Court since 1961. I became convinced then, and still am, that those who are tried by courts martial get as fair trials as those who are tried by juries, sometimes fairer.

During those years I never had cause to think that the practice of general officers commanding convening courts martial and nominating their

members had led to injustice; nor do I remember anyone suggesting that it lacked the appearance of justice. Perhaps it might do if the convening officer had started his military career in the same regiment as an officer accused, whom he may have known. This is likely to be rare and can easily be avoided.

It is to be hoped that both the Government and Parliament will resist any implications which may arise from the judgment of the Court of Human Rights. Changes in the court-martial system may be necessary. If they are, they should be based on the experience of those who have to work it, not on the reasoning of continental lawyers that it cannot provide those accused with a fair trial when it does.

Yours truly,  
FREDERICK LAWTON,  
1 The Village,  
Skelton, York,  
December 20.

## Calculating the standard of maths

From Sir Wilfred Cockcroft

Sir, Professor Emeritus Anthony Ralston (letter, December 13) quotes a sentence from my committee of inquiry's report concerning the use of calculators and its effect on computational ability. That sentence, out of context, naturally raises concerns among other correspondents (letters, December 18, 19, 21). They should know that it is part of a long section in the report concerning evidence we had received and arguments made to us about calculators and their use in schools.

The paragraph from which the sentence comes opens:

It is (also) clear that there is widespread public concern about the use of calculators by children who have not yet mastered the traditional pencil and paper methods of computation. It is feared that children who use calculators too early will not acquire fluency in computation nor confident recall of basic number facts. These fears are understandable and should not be ignored.

After a summary of research evidence available at the time of writing, the paragraph ends:

From all the studies the weight of evidence is strong that the use of calculators has not

produced any adverse effect on basic computational ability. We believe that this is important and should be better known both to teachers and to the public at large. Nevertheless, it remains incumbent upon those who teach mathematics to ensure that the development of appropriate skills of mental and written calculation is not neglected. Nor should a school overlook the need to make parents aware of its policy in regard to the use of calculators by pupils.

Yours faithfully,  
WILFRED COCKCROFT,  
The Old Rectory,  
Warrington,  
Banbury, Oxfordshire,  
December 22.

From Dr Julia Matthews

Sir, Neither the use, misuse nor non-use of calculators is the main cause of poor maths standards.

An over-crowded curriculum for the early years results in less time allowed for assimilation and for sound foundations to be laid.

Yours etc,  
JULIA MATTHEWS,  
50 Sydney Road,  
Bedleyheath, Kent,  
December 21.

## Tax on wheat

From the Minister of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

Sir, On December 20 you published a letter from Mr R. B. Coles complaining that the European Commission had imposed a tax on wheat exports. I have been pressing for this and only wish it had been done sooner.

The normal state of affairs is that grain prices in the Community are kept well above world prices for the benefit of cereal farmers but to the disadvantage of consumers — who, of course, include other farmers. Taxpayers also lose because they have to subsidise the export of the Community's large surplus at the world price.

For once, the world price has risen above the intended producer price. Surely in this situation both the con-

sumer and the taxpayer should get some return for all the costs they normally bear, by ensuring that the market price is held below the world price. This is exactly what an export tax brings about. The tax is simply the mirror image of the subsidy that is paid in the normal case.

In effect Mr Coles is arguing that the cereals grower within the Community ought to get — and the consumer ought to pay — the Community's support price for cereals or the world price, whichever is the higher. I disagree: the first of these prices is quite high enough already.

Yours faithfully,  
DOUGLAS HOGG,  
Minister of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food,  
Whitehall Place, SW1,  
December 21.

## NHS charges

From Dr Lionel Kreeger

Sir, I recently wrote to a general practitioner colleague after a consultation with one of his patients, requesting some details about her previous medical case. I received photocopies of relevant notes, with an invoice for £7.23 and a demand for settlement by return of post.

The general practitioner's practice manager assured me that this was now their standard procedure, and the British Medical Association confirmed that it has become an acceptable development.

After 46 years in medical practice, I find it distasteful. None of my 15 colleagues has had a similar experience.

Yours sincerely,  
LIONEL KREEGER,  
The Group-Analytic Practice,  
88 Montague Mansions, W1,  
December 20.

## Lane discipline

From Mr Nitin A. Kibe

Sir, I disagree with Dr Aileen K. Adams (letter, December 16) about American drivers and lane discipline. In my experience they are notorious for not practising it but many live to tell the tale because speeds are almost absurdly low.

The interstate highways have a large safety buffer because of surplus capacity (local and temporary shortfalls in Los Angeles and at rush hours apart).

Drivers have been conditioned into over-compliance with posted limits at the cost of virtually every other rule for safe superhighway driving. They are taught that nobody is entitled to travel faster than the posted limit. Cases of their enforcing the limit by blocking others are common and widely tolerated by traffic police.

Americans typically "do the limit" in any lane and refuse to yield, setting up a rolling roadblock and forcing faster traffic to weave.

Perhaps things will change now that the 20-year-old 55mph limit has been abolished, however reversing

some of the bad driving habits which it spawned will take time.

Yours etc,  
NITIN KIBE,  
2007 Lorraine Avenue,  
McLean, Virginia 22101,  
December 18.

## Road manners

From Mr S. W. G. Pettigrew

Sir, I recently returned from a "fly-drive" holiday in South Africa. I noticed their car drivers' pleasant acknowledgement to another's act of courtesy (such as pulling over to ease overtaking). This is customarily done by a double flash of the car hazard indicator.

In this season of goodwill to all perhaps we in this country should try it. Such an obvious act of old-world manners might even ameliorate the growing "motorway madness".

Yours faithfully,  
SIMON PETTIGREW,  
The Folly,  
Folly Road, Lambourn, Berkshire,  
December 18.

## Mysteries of the Magi's star

From Mr Ian Ridpath

Sir, Andrew Bamji (letter, December 23) has successfully spotted the ambiguity in the Biblical phrase "we have seen his star in the east", attributed to the Wise Men. As Dr Bamji correctly notes, the Wise Men were in the east, probably somewhere in the vicinity of present-day Baghdad, while the star was in the west. With this information, we can begin to identify a possible celestial cause of the Star of Bethlehem with more certainty.

King Herod died shortly after an eclipse of the Moon, most likely the total eclipse in January in the year 1 BC, and Christ's birth would have preceded this. In June of 2 BC the two brightest planets, Venus and Jupiter, moved into line with each other in the astrologically symbolic constellation of Leo, the lion. As seen from the Middle East, Venus and Jupiter would have appeared as a single object of dazzling intensity in the western evening sky on the evening of June 17.

This explanation, first published some fifteen years ago in *Sky & Telescope* magazine, has curiously been overlooked by British astronomers, despite the fact that it would have been the most astounding celestial event of the era, one that no Wise Man worth his salt could have overlooked.

Yours faithfully,  
IAN RIDPATH,  
48 Otho Court, Brentford, Middlesex.

From Canon Michael Saward

Sir, In the annual agonising over the Bethlehem Star I cannot recall anyone mentioning the reason for the development of the legendary features as distinct from the essential heart of the matter.

According to the Bible, the pagan prophet Balaam had a vision, soon after the Exodus, in which "I look into the future and see the nation of Israel. A king, like a bright star, will arise in that nation. Like a comet he will come". After Christ's resurrection, the apostle John also had a vision in which the glorified Jesus calls himself "the bright star". Twenty years later, the early Christian martyr-bishop Ignatius of Antioch, writing of Christ's birth to a virgin, speaks of "an indescribably bright star, outshining sun, moon, and stars".

Since the nativity stories of Luke and Matthew never mention "a bright star", and no one else seems to have seen it, surely the key is to be found by looking for the "bright star" in, and not over, the manger.

The Magi's star, significant only to them, pointed to the true bright star who had been born in Bethlehem. Later-day legends, in cards and carols, have wrecked the real meaning and set us all looking in the wrong direction. Sadly, the churches have followed the same wild-star chase, failing to see that their endorsement of the legends has damaged the credibility of the whole nativity record.

Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL SAWARD,  
6 Amen Court, EC4.

## Time was when . . .

From Mr Patrick Howarth

Sir, One of the problems of growing old is difficulty in understanding people deemed to be representative of our times.

A decade or so ago such a person was likely to live in a rural area called a neck of the woods, which was surrounded by parameters. Here he or she was much concerned with the nitty-gritty, particularly at the end of the day.

Now his or her successor seems to eat or hear phenomena called sound-bites, in settings said to be, basically, state of the art, while waiting for judgment to be conferred along something known as the bottom line.

Yours in bewilderment,  
PATRICK HOWARTH,  
Flat 2, Pencarrow,  
The Avenue, Sherborne, Dorset.

## Clerical collars

From the Reverend Father B. J. Eager

Sir, Clerical collars (letters, December 23) can be manufactured easily and cheaply from old washing-up liquid bottles. With the aid of reasonably sharp scissors they can be made to fit almost any size of neck or style of modern shirt.

I have worn one such home-made collar the wrong way round so that the name of the washing-up liquid was visible and either nobody noticed or they were too polite to mention it.

Yours sincerely,  
BERNARD EAGER,  
St Catherine of Siena Church,  
Newton Road, Lorton, Warrington.

## Mark II mankind

From Sir George Engle, QC

Sir, I think it was T. H. Huxley, the great Victorian comparative anatomist, who, when asked what changes he would make if redesigning the human frame (report, December 22), replied that he would move the mouth to the top of the head so that he could put his lunch in his top hat and eat it walking along.

Yours faithfully,  
GEORGE ENGLE,  
32 Wood Lane, Highgate, N6,  
December 22.



## SOCIAL NEWS

## Birthdays today

Air Commodore Molly Allott, former director, WRA, 77; Mr W.A. Camp, former Master, Pembroke College, Cambridge, 85; Mr D.B. Carr, cricketer, 69; Miss Madeline Craig, secretary, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 50; Mr T.W. Gould, VC, 81; Mr Max Hastings, Editor-in-Chief, *Evening Standard*, 50; Mr Roy Hattersley, MP, 63; Professor F.P. Kelly, statistician, 45; Mr Nigel Kennedy, violinist, 39; Mr Martin Llewarch, chairman, Transport Development Group, 60; Mr Michael J.P. Marks, deputy chairman, Merrill Lynch, 54; Mr Michael Marland, educationist, 61; Mr Frances Morrell, former leader, ILEA, 58; Sir Patrick O'Connor, former Lord Justice of Appeal, 81; Mrs Bridget Prentice, MP, 43; Mr Simon Raven, author and Oxford Circus, 66; Mrs Joan Ruddock, MP, 52; Dame Maggie Smith, actress, 61; Mr Denzel Washington, actor, 41; The Right Rev W.J. Westwood, Bishop of Peterborough, 70; the Hon Geoffrey Wilson, former chairman, Delta Group, 66; the Marquess of Zetland, 53.

## Appointments in the Forces

**The Army**  
LIEUTENANT COLONEL J W Blair, RA CH D, to (UK) Arm Div, 29.12.95.  
Retirements  
BRIGADIER T Longland, late R Anglian, 31.12.95; W B Stevens, late RA, 1.1.96.  
COLONEL J C W Williams, late RWF, 1.1.96; R E Potts, late RADC, 31.12.95.

## Legal appointments

Mr Roger John Laugharne Thomas, QC, to be a Justice of the High Court, assigned to the Queen's Bench Division.  
Mr Nicolas John Mitchell to be a Circuit Judge, assigned to the Midlands and Oxford Circuit.  
Miss Caroline Sarah Raymond Tibbels to be a Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate from January 22.  
Retirements  
The Hon Mr Justice Gatehouse will retire as a judge of the High Court (Queen's Bench Division) on January 10.

## Anniversaries

**BIRTHS:** Alexander Keith Johnston, geographer, Penicuik, 1804; Samuel Phillips, journalist, 1814; Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th American President 1913-21, Staunton, Virginia, 1856; Flo Baroja y Nessi, novelist, San Sebastian, Spain, 1872; Sir Arthur Eddington, astronomer, Kendal, Cumbria, 1882.

**DEATHS:** St Francis de Sales, Doctor of the Church, 1622; Queen Mary II, reigned with King William III 1689-94, London, 1694; Pierre Bayle, philosopher, 1706; Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1st Baron Macaulay, poet, historian and statesman, London, 1859; George Gissing, novelist, St-Jean de Luz, France, 1903; Maurice Ravel, composer, Paris, 1937; Theodore Dreiser, novelist, Hollywood, 1945; Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy 1900-46, Egypt, 1947; Jack Lovelock, surgeon, Olympic 1500m gold medalist 1936, killed in an accident, New York, 1948; Paul Hindemith, composer, Frankfurt am Main, 1963.  
The Tay Bridge collapsed into the river below, 1879.  
The first weather reports relayed by wireless telegraphy were published in London, 1904.

## Latest wills

Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Conerton Selby, of Duncombe, Tower, Northamptonshire, the horseman and showjumper, left estate valued at £130,112 net.  
Mr Timothy Oliver Parker, of London SW3, left estate valued at £9,264,929 net.  
Mr Harold Ernest Lawrence Hilbert, of Chesham, Surrey, left estate valued at £4,059,661 net.  
Cecilie Elisabeth Fearnley Longdon, of Burghclere, Hampshire, left estate valued at £3,234,101 net.

## Lord Borrie

The life barony conferred upon Sir Gordon Johnson Borrie, QC, has been granted by the name, style and title of Baron Borrie, of Abbots Morton in the County of Hereford and Worcester.

## Church in Wales

**Diocese of St Asaph**  
The Rev Malcolm Squires, currently Vicar of Mildred in the Diocese of Wales, is to be Rector of the Rectorial Benefice of Wrexham in the Diocese of St Asaph.

## University news

**Manchester**  
Appointments to Chairs  
Henry Charles Kitchener, at present Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist with a Special Interest in Oncology to the Aberdeen Royal Hospital and Honorary Senior Lecturer in Gynaecological Oncology in the University of Aberdeen, to be Professor of Gynaecological Oncology, from April 1, 1996.  
Ian James Stratford, at present Head of Experimental Oncology at the MRC Radio-biology Unit, Chilton, Oxford, to be Professor of Pharmacy in the Department of Pharmacy, from January 1, 1996.  
Michael James Dixon, at present Reader in Dental Genetics in the School of Biological Sciences and the Department of Dental Medicine and Surgery, to be Professor of Dental Genetics (in the same departments), from Jan 1, 1996.  
Kevin Donald O'Brien, at present Senior Lecturer in

Orthodontics at the university, to be Professor of Orthodontics in the Department of Dental Medicine and Surgery, from January 1, 1996.  
Martin James Humphries to be Wellcome Trust Professorial Research Fellow in Biochemistry from a date to be arranged.  
William Duncan to be Honorary Professor of Radiation Oncology in the Department of Oncology from September 1, 1995 to August 31, 1998.  
**Appointments**  
Wolke Gertrude Brockhaus to be Lecturer in German Language in the Department of German Language and Literature.  
Stuart Campbell to be Lecturer in Archaeology.  
Duncan Howard Carter to be Lecturer in Dental Sciences (in lieu of Experimental Officer) in the Department of Dental Medicine and Surgery.  
Jacqueline Chanson to be Lecturer in Cardiovascular Medicine (in succession to Research Associate in the Department of Medicine).



A helper supervises children playing at the community enterprise centre on the Austin Estate, Derby

## Making up for the planners' mistakes

By JOHN YOUNG

IN THE middle of the sprawling Austin Estate, on the southern fringes of Derby, is a small and not readily explainable example of how planners go wrong. The Browning Circle is a rotunda of a dozen or so shops intended for the convenience of residents who might have been expected to patronise them regularly; instead for some reason they were shunned and three quarters of them are empty and boarded up.

In these unpromising surroundings a new "community enterprise centre" has been established, and in a bare nine months has made impressive strides.

A former Co-op store, empty for 17 years, has been renovated and redecorated; a bright, welcoming "surgery" where local people can come for advice on housing problems, financial difficulties, welfare rights and even disputes with their neighbours.

The person largely responsible for getting the project off the ground is Carl Taylor, a former railwayman, who gained experience in social work when he became involved in a number of church projects and who works part-time for the Third Wave centre, a similar but longer established scheme in an inner area of the city, which has provided support and advice. Its genesis was a successful bid by Derby City Council for government renovation funds, which led to the formation



Suzanne Cliff, the project's development officer

of a residents' group invited to come up with a plan for tackling the estate's problems.

On the surface the area does not appear to be deprived, consisting mainly of semi-detached and terraced housing which, at the insistence of the former owner who gave the land to the council and after whom the estate is named, is linked by quiet, winding roads bordered by lawns and hedges. It could be almost anywhere in suburbia.

But a survey unearthed familiar complaints such as unemployment, crime and fear of crime, particularly among the elderly; low incomes; a lack of training and

education opportunities; and a lack of facilities for young people. To those Mr Taylor adds his own observation that two generations of excessive local authority paternalism has bred a dependency culture, in which people have become unused to taking initiatives to improve their own lives.

The first modest steps to engage people in running more of their own affairs include the establishment of five new neighbourhood watches, the reopening of a youth club, a garden tool hire service to encourage people to maintain and improve their surroundings, a "befriending" service for old people and the provision of after-school child care services for working mothers. The centre itself also includes a rapidly growing lending library.

More ambitious plans include training and education, including vocational courses in business management and information technology, to build up people's confidence and help them into employment. The centre is hoping to negotiate a long lease on a spacious and well-equipped nearby building owned by a hospital trust but now considered surplus to needs.

The obvious dynamism of the project has attracted funding from both the city council and the Government, including the salary of a full-time development worker, Suzanne Cliff. More than 40 people attended the first annual general meeting on an



estate where only a few months ago, according to Mr Taylor, it would have been difficult to attract even four or five people to a public meeting.

"Already we can see a dramatic change in people's readiness to speak out, contribute ideas and communicate," he says. "They are shedding their apathy and starting to see that things can change."

"There is a buzz," Mrs Cliff adds. "People who are disadvantaged have got used to waiting for something to happen, but they come here and see that things can be made to happen. I like to think we are bridging the gap between people and authority. A lot of people are afraid of authority and we hope they can learn to lose that fear."

The Austin Community Enterprise Advice Centre is one of the winners of the 1995 Community Enterprise Awards, organised by Business in the Community and sponsored by The Times and Touche Ross.

## Forthcoming marriages

**Mr D.J. Bowdley and Miss S.E. Herd**  
The engagement is announced between David, elder son of Mr John Bowdley, of New York and the Hon Mrs Mervyn Herd, of West Fenton, East Lothian, and Sally, daughter of Mr and Mrs Charles Herd, of Gullane, East Lothian.

**Mr S.A. Brydon and Miss J.M. Prosser**  
The engagement is announced between Simon, elder son of the late W.R.C. Brydon and of Mrs J.M. Brydon, of Edinburgh, and Joanna, daughter of the Hon Lord and Lady Prosser, also of Edinburgh.

**Mr S.J. Davies and Miss M.C. Loder**  
The engagement is announced between Stephen John, son of Mr and Mrs J. Davies, of Llanelli, Dyfed, and Mary, daughter of Mr and Mrs R. Loder, of Lower Beeding, West Sussex.

**Mr S.G.V. Hill and Miss H.V. Southall**  
The engagement is announced between Simon Guy Valdimir, son of Mr and Mrs Anthony Hill, of Frisky-on-the-Wreake, Leicestershire, and Helen Valerie, daughter of Mr and Mrs Walter Southall, of Farnworth, Manchester.

**Mr T. Fritzlaff and Miss L. Turner**  
The engagement is announced between Tony, son of Mr and Mrs Robert Fritzlaff, of Melbourne, Australia, and Lucy, daughter of Mr Gavin Turner, of Bath, and Mrs Jane Knight, of London.

**Mr G.N. McBaile and Miss S.E. Benyon**  
The engagement is announced between Neville, elder son of Mr and Mrs George McBaile, of Lower Woodshaw Farm, Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, and Susanah, youngest daughter of Sir William and Lady Baily of Englefield House, Englefield, Berkshire.

**Mr H.R. Rivington and Miss J.L. Jones**  
The engagement is announced between Hugh, younger son of Mr Christopher Rivington and the late Mrs Irene Anne Rivington, of Hincham, Suffolk, and Julia, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Jensen, of Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire.

**Mr D.J. Zeill and Miss G.L. Robertson**  
The engagement is announced between Donald, son of Mr and Mrs Morison Zeill, of Falkirk, Scotland, and Gill, daughter of the late Jim Robertson and of Mrs Frances Robertson, of Toronto, Canada.

## Ancient city reveals more of its secrets

By NORMAN HAMMOND, ARCHAEOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

THE international campaign to shed new light on ancient Aksum, once called "the last of the great civilisations of antiquity to be revealed to modern knowledge", has yielded striking results. Tombs and monuments have been excavated both within the city of Aksum itself, in the northern highlands of Ethiopia, and on the hills outside, indicating a larger ceremonial area than initially thought.

In addition, remains of the staple cereal of modern Ethiopia, have been found for the first time in an ancient context, suggesting that it could have already been important nearly 2,000 years ago.

Based on the Tigre plateau north of the highlands of the Blue Nile, 350 miles from Addis Ababa, the Aksumite kingdom linked South Arabia and Somalia with Nubia and the southern frontiers of Roman Egypt. The kingdom flourished for most of the first millennium AD, and imports from the Roman Empire have been among the recent finds.

The impressive granite stelae, monoliths up to 100ft high and elaborately carved, were first recorded by a German expedition in 1906, but further work only took place after the Second World War, when the British Institute in East Africa began several years of excavation. Dr David Phillipson, of Cambridge University, is continuing the tradition: his team left in October for their third season.

"We have already investigated major tombs in the centre, and now we will continue work in the domestic occupation area, with an emphasis on recovering information about the food-producing economy of ancient Aksum," Dr Phillipson said. An Italo-American project has already successfully recovered seeds of *tef* from layers dated to AD 400-700, as well as wheat and barley.

"Tef is one of the principal crops in Ethiopia today, used for *injira*, the pancake-like bread eaten at every meal," Professor Julie Hansen, of Boston University, said. "Despite its intensive use now, we know very little about where and when it was first domesticated."

"The grains are minute, only about a millimetre across, and there are many wild types. If these grains prove to be of the domesticated type, it will be the first evidence for the ancient cultivation of this important crop."

The *tef* was found during excavations on the hill of Bieta Giorgis, where tombs, stone stelae, and occupation areas have been found by Professors Kathryn Bard and Rodolfo Raschewsky.

Dr Phillipson's project will explore the thesis that Aksum first prospered by exploiting such indigenous resources; before taking control of gold and ivory sources and becoming one of the great trading centres of the ancient world.

The British team will also continue to explore the great platform, underlying the existing Cathedral of Maryam Tsion: although much of the church was rebuilt after destruction in 1535, they have found that part of the older building was incorporated into the new structure. The podium on which it stands dates back to the Aksumite period, but what sort of building stood on it is not yet known.

BMD'S: 0171 782 7272  
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

## PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982  
FAX: 0171 481 9313

The Lord God has given me the tongue of one who is most instructed in counsel the woe with a timor work he made my hearting every morning that I might be able to do his will.  
Isaiah 50: 4 (NIV)

## BIRTHS

**CARLES** - On 20th December 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**CARTER** - On December 22nd 1995, to Louise (née Leland) and Charles, a son, James Francis Philip.

**CLARK** - On 23rd December 1995, to Alan and Susan, a daughter, Zoe.

**COVATTA** - On 20th December 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**GAV** - On December 23rd, 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**GRIMLEY** - On December 23rd, 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**HOOD** - On 23rd December 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**WOLFE** - On Christmas Eve at East Surrey Hospital, to Joanna (née Morgan) and John, a daughter, Lucy Alice.

**DEATHS**  
**BAILEY** - Maurice Christopher, on Christmas Eve, aged 87, at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, after a long illness borne with so much of complaint. Devoted husband of the late Sallie (née King), housewife and sportsman of the old school and a keen gardener. Buried at 11.45 am, followed by lunch at the Kings Arms. Flowers welcome to M.J. Bailey Ltd, 43 High Street, Linton, Cambridgeshire CB23 9PL. Tel: 01223 891426.

## DEATHS

**BRADY** - On December 27th to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**CHALABY** - On 21st December, 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

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**GAV** - On December 23rd, 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**GRIMLEY** - On December 23rd, 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**HOOD** - On 23rd December 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**WOLFE** - On Christmas Eve at East Surrey Hospital, to Joanna (née Morgan) and John, a daughter, Lucy Alice.

**DEATHS**  
**BAILEY** - Maurice Christopher, on Christmas Eve, aged 87, at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, after a long illness borne with so much of complaint. Devoted husband of the late Sallie (née King), housewife and sportsman of the old school and a keen gardener. Buried at 11.45 am, followed by lunch at the Kings Arms. Flowers welcome to M.J. Bailey Ltd, 43 High Street, Linton, Cambridgeshire CB23 9PL. Tel: 01223 891426.

## DEATHS

**BRADY** - On December 27th to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**CHALABY** - On 21st December, 1995, to the Rev and Mrs. (Hampshire) and Jim, a daughter, Emily Louise.

**CLARK** - On 23rd December 1995, to Alan and Susan, a daughter, Zoe.

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## OBITUARIES

## PROFESSOR JAMES MEADE

James Meade, CB, FBA, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Cambridge, 1957-68, died on December 22 aged 88. He was born on June 23, 1907.

JAMES MEADE was one of the outstanding economists of his generation. The central theme of his life's work was the theory of economic policy, in all its aspects. That work was the source of many of the ideas that are now common currency among economists and policymakers. Meade was awarded a Nobel Prize in Economics in 1977, only the second British economist to have been thus honoured.

James Edward Meade was the son of Charles Hippisley Meade of Bath and descended in earlier generations from a family of Somerset parsons, with remote connections to Ireland. He was educated at Malvern College and Oriel College, Oxford, at both of which he held classical scholarships. After a first in Mods in 1928, he deserted the classics for economics and obtained another first in PPE in 1930.

This was at a time when economists at Oxford were few and in 1931 he spent a year at Trinity College, Cambridge, under Dennis Robertson, whose *Banking Policy and the Price Level* had recently started a new approach to monetary thinking. The monetary systems of the world were in a state of crisis. Keynes had published his *Treatise on Money* only a few months before. Cambridge economics was in a ferment of argument which led on a few years later to Keynes's *General Theory*.

All of this gave Meade the stimulus which he needed, and he very quickly made his mark as one of the group of young economists ("the circus") who met to discuss Keynes's ideas. Out of these discussions came an article by Richard Kahn (the late Lord Kahn) which is remembered as a milestone in the history of economic thought because it was the origin of the concept of the multiplier. What was often forgotten was that it was Meade, Kahn's collaborator, who first generalised this seminal concept as "Mr Meade's Relation" — now recognised as the seed of the Keynesian revolution in economic theory. This was quite a debut for a novice in economics, not yet 25 years old.

Meade went back the next year to Oxford to Hertford College, where he had already been elected a Fellow in 1930. He remained there until 1937, lecturing, teaching and serving for a period as Bursar. His first book, *Economic Analysis and Policy* (1936), though designed as an undergraduate text, had all the qualities that he retained in later writings. At Hertford, as throughout his life, he was writing all the time. He was one of the most prolific of economists, perhaps too prolific for his ideas always to receive their due recognition. The book — the substantial book — remained his preferred medium, even in his later years, by which time the journal article had increasingly become the predominant vehicle for new ideas in economics. Despite the great amount of his writing, it was always careful, scholarly, well thought out and well presented.

By 1938 he had already achieved a reputation. In that year he was invited to join the staff of the Economic Intelligence Service of the League of Nations in Geneva, where it was his responsibility to write the then very important annual *World Economic Survey*.

When war came he was still in Geneva. By early in 1940 the financing of the war had come to present a problem only to be solved — as Keynes



had shown in his *How to Pay for the War* — in terms of allocation of resources based on accurate and up-to-date national income measurements. Some of the economists already working in the Cabinet Office persuaded Sir Edward Bridges, then Secretary of the Cabinet, to let them appoint a minute staff to prepare, for the first time in British history, official national income estimates. James Meade and Richard Stone were invited to take on the task. Meade, with his wife and infant children, made a perilous journey across France, narrowly escaping being overrun by the advancing German armies and leaving their car on the quayside at Nantes.

During the next 12 months Meade and Stone created, under immense pressure of time and insistent demands from a by now impatient Treasury, a wholly original system of national income statistics which has survived in essentials ever since. Meade was the chief architect of the logical framework, Stone of the statistical brickwork. But in the end the labours were shared equally between them. They saw the fulfilment of them in the White Paper which accompanied Kingsley Wood's Budget of 1941, prepared under the influence of Keynes, who was by then in the Treasury.

Over the next few years of war, Meade moved on to other things, playing a large part in the economic discussions and negotiations that led up to the Atlantic Treaty, to Bretton Woods and to the White Paper on postwar employment.

In 1946 he succeeded Lionel Robbins as Director of the Economic Section of the Cabinet Office. He was quite unlike any other economist in high office in Whitehall. Where others were anxious to work shoulder-to-shoulder with their Civil Service colleagues, Meade remained detached, austere, rigid in his analytical thinking, prepared to make civil servants think in his terms precisely and accurately about their

problems. In the early days of nationalisation and public sector economics, to take one example, he was already making them think about ideal outputs and marginal cost pricing, matters which became familiar by the 1960s but which were unheard of in the 1940s. For his Civil Service work Meade was appointed CB in 1947, one of very few temporary civil servants to be honoured in this way.

In that year he left Whitehall to return to academic work, joining the London School of Economics to hold a chair that was primarily concerned with international trade. In the ten years that he held it he greatly enhanced his own personal reputation and that of his department.

He continued to be associated with the school as a governor, and as such took very much to heart the difficulties and tribulations of the school and the breakdown of the human relations between staff and students in the late 1960s. Meade was a passionate defender of rational argument and democratic decision and believed that the principles of democracy, as well as the essentials of a university, were in danger of being destroyed by the use of force.

In 1957, when the Cambridge Chair of Political Economy became vacant through the retirement of Sir Dennis Robertson, Meade was elected to it. He moved to Cambridge at a time when the Cambridge school was dominated by the tradition of Keynes and the first generation of his disciples. Meade, himself in essentials but by no means uncritically a Keynesian, had problems fitting into the new environment. He was never anxious to dominate, still less to administer; the Cambridge faculty.

Over the next ten years, nonetheless, he gradually became the keystone of the Cambridge teaching. His lucid lectures on economic principles formed the intellectual foundation of a generation of Cambridge undergraduates. He made Cambridge teaching more pre-

cise, more rigidly analytical. He enjoyed his contacts with undergraduates and they responded to it.

Meade made no attempt to found a school of Meadeans. But by his sheer intellectual quality he was the largest influence on the ablest of his younger colleagues. A number of these got together to produce in 1980 a festschrift, *Public Policy and the Tax System*. Two years earlier he had been associated with a group of them in the writing of a major study of direct taxation that came to be known as the Meade Report.

To the surprise of many of his friends and despite their earnest attempts to dissuade him, Meade decided in 1967 to resign the chair. He was anxious to devote himself more single-mindedly to writing economics. He had set himself a vast task of writing a many-volume *Principles of Political Economy*, a stage-by-stage approach by rigid analysis to economic reality. The first two volumes had been published in 1965 and 1968, and a great deal more — more than a normal man's life work — still remained to be accomplished.

As a sincere liberal, he distrusted much of the more socialist thinking of some of his senior colleagues. He continued to hold a Fellowship at Christ's College to which, as professor, he had been elected, and a specially created Nuffield Research fellowship; he retained a room in the faculty building, and shared almost as fully as in the past in all the theoretical disputation which went on there. He continued to run a seminar for graduate students and he continued, perhaps a little more remotely, to take his responsible part in the work of the Royal Economic Society, of which he was president 1964-66, and that of the British Academy, to which he had been elected in 1951.

While he was at the LSE, he had written one of his most distinguished contributions to theoretical economics, the two volumes of *The Theory of International Economic Policy*. After his retirement from the chair at Cambridge, books of an astonishing range continued to flow from his pen. He received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1977 for his work, in particular, on international trade cycles.

In the late 1970s he embarked on a major new study, with some younger collaborators, on the subject of stagflation. Remaining himself much more a Keynesian than a monetarist, yet recognising the challenge posed to full employment policies by inflation, he put forward proposals that drew something from each of those schools, together with distinctive suggestions of his own on incomes policy. These ideas were widely discussed at the time of their first publication in 1982, not least in the SDP, of which Meade was a founder member, though his ideas in the end did not find favour there.

Meade's liberal rationalism evoked comparisons with J. S. Mill, as did his combination of courtesy, kindness and modesty with an underlying fervour. Meade was, indeed, a person of curious contradictions. An Irish streak in his make-up, combined with an extraordinarily strong sense of principle, made him at the same time somewhat quixotic and somewhat inflexible. He was seldom willing to compromise with worldly-wise views that infringed his sense of justice and his sense of logic.

Meade was also a practical man, a skilled carpenter and cabinet maker, and the possessor of a fine baritone singing voice. He is survived by his wife Margaret, whom he married in 1933, one son and three daughters.

## SIR COLVILLE DEVERELL

Sir Colville Deverell, GBE, KCMG, CVO, Governor of Mauritius, 1959-62, and later Secretary-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, died on December 18 aged 88. He was born on February 21, 1907.



THE second career of "Dev" Deverell, on which he embarked in his late fifties, was prompted by the experiences of his first one. While working as a colonial administrator in two hemispheres, he observed at first hand the misery caused by unwanted pregnancies and the consequences of over-population in the Third World.

This was nowhere more apparent than in Mauritius, his final posting, where he arrived as Governor and Commander-in-Chief in 1959. Its heterogeneous population of 600,000 was then largely sustained by an annual yield of 600,000 tons of sugar exports — one ton of sugar per head of population. This simple equation which underlay the island's economy was upset, however, by a fall in the price of sugar and by a rising birthrate.

Mauritius succeeded in diversifying by developing its tourism for example. South Africa's porphyry status at the time made travel firms eager to discover fresh locations, and Mauritians were not slow to take advantage. But the problems which over-population exemplified were those which Deverell had also seen in the West Indies and in black Africa, and made him conscious of the need to promote family planning.

Born Colville Montgomery Deverell near Dublin, he was the son of the accountant-general of the Bank of Ireland. The Deverells were Irish Protestants who had first come to England with William the Conqueror, then crossed to Ireland with William of Orange, settling down in Co. Clare for the next few centuries.

"Dev" (he was never known by any other name) went from Portlaoine, Enniskillen, to Trinity College Dublin, to read law. An accomplished sportsman throughout his life, he also played tennis and cricket for Trinity College. A contemporary in the cricket first XI was the playwright Samuel Beckett.

He had always wanted, however, to join the Colonial Service, inspired by the example of his uncle who had served in Kenya for many years. After being accepted by Whitehall, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, for a 12-month course in local politics and languages, then sailed for Kenya in 1931.

Deverell spent the next seven years as a district officer before moving to Nairobi in 1938 as clerk to the colony's executive and legislative councils. Commissioned into the Army on the outbreak of the Second World War, he was posted to the civil affairs

branch of the East Africa Command in 1941 and spent the next five years in Italian and British Somaliland and Ethiopia. He was a member of Lord de la Warr's delegation to Ethiopia in 1944 and was seconded to the War Office for the negotiations which led in 1946 to the Italian peace treaty. He ended the war in the rank of acting brigadier.

Deverell then returned to Kenya, first as secretary of the Development and Reconstruction Authority. He next became financial secretary and chief native commissioner, before becoming administrative secretary in 1949. As such, Deverell planned the 1952 visit to Kenya by the young Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip, during which she succeeded to the Throne on the death of her father King George VI.

In the same year Deverell moved to become colonial secretary in Jamaica — in effect the deputy to the Governor Sir Hugh Foot (later Lord Caradon). The Foots and the Deverells were to become close and lasting friends. In 1953 he was appointed CVO, and created KCMG in 1957.

In 1955 Deverell was made the last Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Windward Islands, transferring four years later to Mauritius. He retired from the Colonial Service in 1962. Having been appointed OBE in 1946, he was advanced to GBE in 1963.

It so happened that at about that time the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), a federation of family planning associations throughout the world, was prospecting for its first full-time Secretary-General, to provide strong leadership and increase the organisation's international status. Sir Colville Deverell was almost tailor-made for the job.

His strengths were an incisive, independent mind, backed by a natural Irish charm and sociability. With these weapons in his armoury he led the federation during the next five years during which it saw a steady expansion in its field of activity throughout the developing world, particularly in the Indian sub-continent and South America.

At home he encouraged internal debate over the IPPF's role, successfully arguing the case for backing the encouragement of voluntary family planning as opposed to statutory population control, imposed from above.

At the same time he chaired the UN family planning mission to India in 1966 and a similar one to Ceylon six years later. He also accepted a number of jobs for the British Government, acting as a constitutional adviser on the Seychelles and later for the Virgin Islands.

He retained his sporting prowess, playing squash and golf as well as tennis and cricket, which he continued until well into his seventies when Alzheimer's disease caught up with him. He had spent the last eight years in hospital.

Deverell is survived by his wife Margaret, whom he met when she went out to visit her cousin, the Attorney-General, in Kenya during his time there, and by two of their three sons. His eldest son John, who was M15 Director of Intelligence in Belfast, died in the helicopter crash on the Mull of Kintyre which killed many of Ulster's leading security officials 18 months ago.

## PERSONAL COLUMN

## DEATHS

WAGGELL — On Friday 22nd December peacefully in hospital, Thomas Stanley Waggoner, beloved husband of Mary, eldest daughter of Charles, and son of James. Private family cremation on Tuesday 23rd January 1996. The funeral service will be held at 11.00 am at St. Margaret's Church, Churching, Essex at 11.00 am. Family flowers only, but if desired donations may be made to Cancer Research or The Salvation Army, 4-6 Handingtons Road, Hove, Sussex. Tel: (01273) 787333.

WERNER — Peacefully on December 26th 1995, aged 99, Tibby, Creation Service on Thursday 4th January 2000. Cremation at 11.00 am at St. Nicholas Church, London. No flowers, but donations to The NSPCC, 67 Bedford Hill, London EC1N 8ED.

WILLIAMS — John David, on 24th December, suddenly in hospital, aged 80, beloved husband of Rose, beloved father of Helen and Katherine and much loved grandfather to Kim, Charlotte and Sara, Ben, Matthew and Daniel. Buried to Hoveley & Watkins (01628) 422754.

WOODWARD — Leslie Harvey, dear husband of Annette, suddenly on 26th December 1995, cremation 1.45 pm January 4th 1996, City of London Cemetery. No flowers.

YOLLAND — Brigadier Robert Clifford Yolland OBE, peacefully on December 24th 1995, aged 87 years. Funeral service on Friday December 29th at 2.30 pm at St. Nicholas Church, London. No flowers, but donations to The NSPCC, 67 Bedford Hill, London EC1N 8ED.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

BRADSHAW — To Barbara and Stuart. Congratulations from all the family.

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**COURT AND SOCIAL PAGE**

OVER THE NEW YEAR PERIOD THE FOLLOWING DEADLINES WILL APPLY:

Notices to appear on Thursday, December 28th, should be received in writing by noon on Wednesday, December 27th. Notices to appear on Friday, December 29th, should be received in writing by 5 pm on Wednesday, December 27th.

Notices to appear on Saturday, December 30th, Monday, January 1st, Tuesday, January 2nd, should be received in writing by 12 noon on Thursday, December 28th.

ALL NOTICES ARE ACCEPTED SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION

TEL 0171 762 7347  
FAX 0171 481 5313

## DAVID NICKERSON

David Nickerson, antiques dealer, died after a stroke on November 23 aged 62. He was born on March 24, 1933.

DAVID NICKERSON dealt in antiques for the firm of Mallett and Son for 38 years and played a key part in its transformation. Mallett's in Bond Street had long been reputed to lead the field in classic English furniture. The firm's fortunes burgeoned under Francis Egerton, who was chairman of the company, 1950-83, and who moved it towards a more catholic and eye-catching style.

Egerton launched a controversially-slanted sister shop in 1967 at Bourdon House, Davies Street, and asked Nickerson to run it. Nickerson

had joined the Bond Street shop ten years previously, and oversaw Mallett at Bourdon House for the next quarter of a century. He was a director of Mallett's, 1968-83, and managing director thereafter.

Just north of Berkeley Square, a huge plane tree dwarfs a garden facade of baroque brick. Here, in the former townhouse of the Duke of Westminster, Nickerson presided over a labyrinth of showrooms into which occasionally the aromatic fumes of glue and lacquer might waft from the warren of tiled workshops below stairs. On the ground floor, tall windows gave onto a walled garden, home to Mogul fountains, Roman busts, Renaissance wellheads, and gates of writhing gilded iron. Nickerson was catholic in his enthusiasms.

and one never knew what one might find in the shop.

Born in London, Nickerson was educated at Eton, at Norwich High School and at Trinity College, Cambridge.



After university, he lived in Paris to learn French, but then returned to London where he joined Mallett's. His potential was immediately spotted by Egerton, and he was groomed for high positions.

Nickerson was the least pompous and stuffy of men. He was quick to calculate the intricacies of business and to understand how, by a cocktail of credit, cajolery and discount, to nail a deal.

He lived during the week in Notting Hill, with a series of flat-coated black retrievers, and within walking distance of his local pub, the Windsor Castle. He had more than a touch of the Mr Toad about him, favouring pinstripes — nearer the weekend tweeds — and yellow pullovers. He is survived by his wife Sara, two sons and a daughter.

## OLD VIC

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM

Let it be said at the outset that this is an enchanting performance of the play. The word "enchanting" is not vaguely used as an adjective of general praise, but to mean that the stage creates altogether to be self-consciously theatrical, that a spell descends upon it, that illusion is complete, and that the fairies are the fairies that is "enchanting"; what is early Victorian or up to date. What matters, is that the other contributors — Guthrie, Messel, de Valois — should exercise their own imaginations freely. They can call the result "early Victorian" if they will. Perhaps it is, if you think in those terms, but it appears as one of the loveliest, most magical, and least affected productions of the play that the stage has seen for many years. There

## ON THIS DAY

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## ENGLISH ADVERTISING BY WIRELESS

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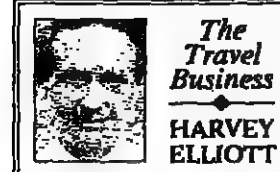


## BA still does the business

CLOSE ON the heels of a recent report showing that British holidaymakers get the best and the cheapest air fares in Europe comes a survey by American Express which concludes that business-class air fares from Britain are the lowest in Europe.

A trip of 500 miles from London costs on average 44p a mile compared with 65p a mile from Paris and 77p a mile from Geneva. The figures should silence some of those who regularly moan about the high price of flying around Europe on business.

But there are some worrying trends developing. While



The Travel Business  
HARVEY ELLIOTT

business air fares generally have risen on average by about 3 per cent during 1995, Britain's airlines have put prices up by 6 per cent.

The second cheapest country in which to buy a business class ticket is Spain, where it costs 51p a mile for an average 500-mile journey. This is of concern to British Airways, which remains convinced that Iberia, the Spanish carrier, is only able to compete because it receives prohibited handouts from the Spanish Government which the European Union appears to sanction.

Sir Colin Marshall, who still has four days to run as BA's chairman and chief executive, was upset last week to hear that the EU had given the go-ahead for a £400 million cash injection for Iberia. He was particularly worried that the company had found a formula which enabled it to claim that it was not receiving state aid.

But, despite so much state cash now propping up its rivals, BA is still the world's most profitable airline, even when its business-class fares are comparatively cheap. So relax, Sir Colin. Let Iberia have its money. You and the new management team can still beat them.

# Where you'll holiday in 1996

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

WINTER holidays, especially to America, are proving increasingly popular despite a big fall in the number of summer packages being taken (see below), according to Britain's biggest travel agency chain.

Between now and the end of March, more than 2.6 million people will travel on package holidays in search of either sun or snow—an increase of 7 per cent on last season, Lunn Poly says in its annual survey.

While sales for summer package holidays are stuck in the doldrums, bookings for this winter are booming. America has already grabbed a 10 per cent share of the market compared with 7 per cent at the same time last year.

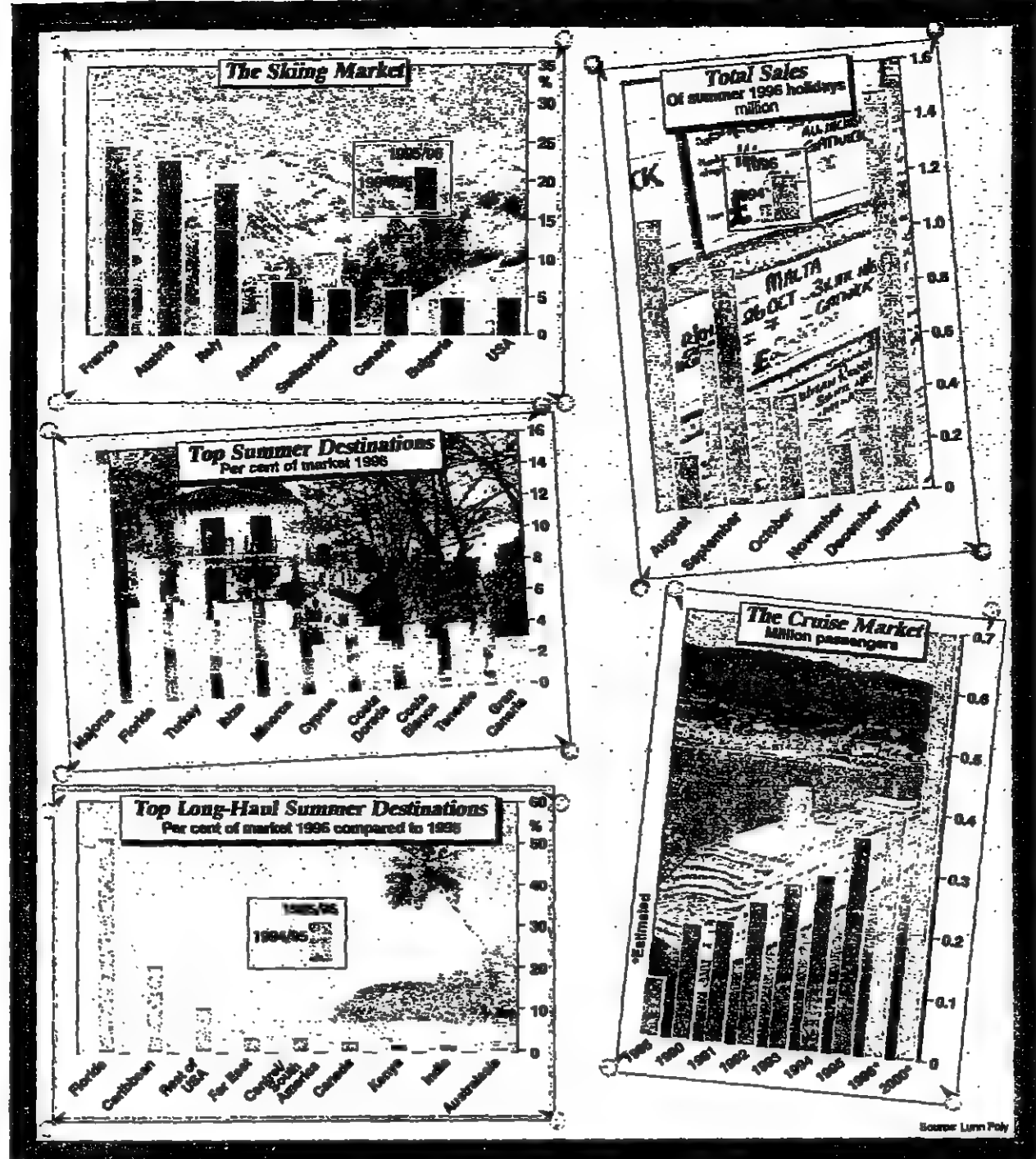
Italy has seen the strongest growth in ski bookings, mainly at the expense of Austria which has now slipped into second place behind France. Italy is now a close third in popularity with a 20 per cent market share.

Cruising is also proving an increasingly attractive holiday option. About 350,000 people will have taken a cruise holiday this year compared with 283,000 ten years ago. Over the next four years the numbers are expected to double again, convincing the big tour operators such as Thomson and Airtrons to operate their own cruise ships. Bookings are already well beyond their expectations.

The other good news for the travel industry is in the number of short breaks being chosen by holidaymakers who appear no longer to be prepared to take a traditional two-week seaside holiday in a foreign resort.

In all 2.7 million people will have taken a short-break holiday this year with long-haul destinations—especially New York—proving particularly popular.

Overall, however, during 1995 the travel industry suffered a static year and no increase in sales. Many tour operators had convinced themselves that the growth of about 12 per cent, to which they had become accustomed since the end of the Gulf War, would continue and they therefore put on additional



capacity which they were eventually forced to sell at a discount. The long hot summer also persuaded many late bookers not to bother going abroad.

Spain remained the most popular destination, attracting 42 per cent of the total market in package holidays. Turkey, however, was the success story of the year

leaping from sixth to third in the top ten list of most popular countries. Long-haul holidays booked through travel agents accounted for 10 per cent of all bookings, slightly up on the previous year's figures. The upturn was largely due to Florida's revival which attracted half the long-haul holidaymakers.

Skiing holidays appear to be continuing their slide, with agents reporting a drop of about 10 per cent on last year's sales. Many skiers book late, however, when they see what snow conditions are likely to be. Two years ago Italy had only 15 per cent of the market, but this has dramatically changed. Italian resorts are catching up fast on those in the

two most popular countries, France and Austria. Although it is too early to judge which destinations will prove most popular for 1996, early indications show that America and Turkey are increasing their share of the market. Spain's dominance, so far, appears to have been eroded, possibly because of an increase in hotel prices.

## BARGAINS OF THE WEEK

**FLY-DRIVE** holidays to Florida are available from next Thursday until March 17 for £259 per person for a fortnight with Lunn Poly. The special offer, based on two adults travelling together, includes return flights from Gatwick to Miami and car hire for two weeks. Details: 01203 225888.

**SAVINGS** of £180 per person are available on a fortnight's holiday in Goa, departing on January 5 with Tropical Places. The new price, including bed and breakfast in a four-star hotel, is £699. Details: 01342 825123.

**FIRST CHOICE** has cut up to £20 off its initial brochure price for holidays to Greece next year and there are more "two weeks for the price of one" offers in its second edition brochure. Details: 01293 560777.

**ROUND-THE-WORLD** air tickets from £872 are being offered by STA Travel for departures between March and June. The itinerary includes flights from London to Johannesburg, on to Perth and Sydney, land travel to Cairns and flights, which must be taken before June 15, to Pacific destinations and back to London. Details: 0171-361 6262.

**EASYJET** plans to start Luton-Aberdeen flights early next month at cost-cutting prices similar to the £29 one-way fares it already offers between Luton and Edinburgh and Glasgow. Details: 01582 445566.

**FLIGHTS** to Malaysia on the national airline will be available at a cut-price £485

**TENERIFE**, popular with British visitors for Christmas this year, is available at bargain prices for 14 nights from Inspirations Holidays. Departures are from Gatwick and Manchester on January 12. Costs of £239 and £270 respectively include self-catering accommodation. Details: 01293 822244.

**ORLANDO** for a fortnight on a room-only basis costs from £349 per person on flights from Birmingham and Manchester on January 5 with Unijet Travel. Details: 01444 459000.

**BOOK** your main summer holiday before January 31 with Advantage Travel Centres, the largest group of independent travel agents, and you will be offered a free short break, including stays in Paris or Brussels via Eurostar. Details: 0800 600900.

**BRITISH Airways** has introduced a lower Tel Aviv business-class fare of £723 for those staying away for two days or more, a saving of £201. Details: 0181-897 4000.

**AIR FRANCE** has extended its offer of free parking at London City Airport for passengers flying to Paris. Details: 0181-742 6600.

**GULF Air's** telephone check-in service is now running at Heathrow for first and business-class travellers to Bahrain and beyond. If they call three hours before departure, they need only report at the airport 40 minutes before the flight. Check-in no: 0181-759 4719.

**GET ROOM** service from the kitchens of Le Gavroche, one of London's most prestigious restaurants, when staying in the residential suites at 47 Park Street. The hotel, located above the restaurant in the heart of Mayfair, is offering a special rate until January 7 of a one-bedroom suite for £170 plus VAT, compared with the normal rate of £255 plus VAT. Details: 0171-491 7282.

**THE Lodge** at Vail, Colorado, which claims to be the only hotel within walking distance of the resort's ski slopes, is offering rates up to 40 per cent off for guests who stay more than four nights between January 13 and 31. The promotional room rates start at £145 per room per night and include breakfast. Details: 001 970 476 5011.

**CHEWTON Glen** at New Milton, in Hampshire, is

offering rooms at £129 a night, instead of £185, in January. The price includes a continental breakfast and use of the health club and golf course. Details: 01425 275341.

**THE Classic** rooms are available at £99 a night at Gleneagles in Tayside from January 4 to 31. Reductions on four-poster bedrooms and suites are also available. Guests travelling to the hotel from within Scotland qualify for free rail travel. Details: 01764 6662231.

**THE Chelsea Hotel** in Knightsbridge is offering a special rate of £79 per person per night, including VAT, until February 12, based on two people sharing a double room. The price includes a glass of champagne on arrival and English breakfast. The hotel is also undergoing a £10 million renovation. Details: 0171-235 4377.

## Book now, pay later

TRAVEL AGENTS and tour operators across Britain are anxiously watching for the first signs of a post-Christmas surge in holiday bookings. Harvey Elliott writes.

Without at least an indication that families are prepared to commit themselves to a holiday in the sun in 1996, the industry may be forced to accept that Britain has turned its back on the traditional package holiday.

So far bookings are down by at least 25 per cent compared with Christmas last year, and even the wildest optimists are convinced that the final number of package holidays taken next year will be at least 10 per cent fewer than this. The few days between Christmas and the new year are regarded as crucial in establishing a pattern for the future.

Much will depend on the success of a range of new measures designed to stimulate early bookings. Thomson, for example, has introduced a scheme known as "fluid pricing", which came into effect yesterday. This turns on its head the traditional idea of holidays coming down in price the nearer to the departure date. Now, more than a million holidays will be heavily discounted immediately they go on sale and gradually increase in price if demand grows.

Charles Newbold, Thomson's managing director, said that late discounts were introduced to top up the last few seats on a flight. "Over the past few years things have got out of hand. Unless we turn the tide now, I fear that within a few years there will be no early booking market left," he told travel agents in a letter.

Lunn Poly is offering 10 per cent, free insurance or a "buy now, pay before you fly" instalment scheme. Other tour

Meeting new friends seems to be part of the package.  
Irene

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## Company pensions 'rising by 3%'

By Philip Bassett  
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

INCREASES in company pension benefits averaged just over 3 per cent this year, according to research findings published today. The study comes ahead of the application of limited price indexation safeguards being applied to pensions.

While company pension schemes are currently not obliged to increase pensions to compensate for the effects of inflation — the new part-indexation under the 1995 Pension Act will start to

apply from April 1997 — the analysis by Incomes Data Services (IDS), the pay research company, shows that the great majority of company pension schemes guarantee at least some increase.

IDS says that while almost no schemes outside the public sector offered full inflation-proofing to pensions, most company schemes provided for inflation-matching up to a particular level — usually 5 per cent.

On individual schemes, the study says that at the top of the scale Glaxo's pension scheme guarantees to match

inflation at up to 12 per cent a year, while Shell's and Peugeot Talbot's promise protection against an inflation rate of 7 per cent.

Some schemes guarantee a fixed rise regardless of inflation, with Allied Domecq, Calor Gas, Grand Metropolitan, Legal & General, RHM and Scottish Equitable all guaranteeing increases of 3 per cent.

This year, the analysis of increases awarded to more than 1.5 million pensioners receiving benefits from a sample of largely blue chip companies, ranging from Abbey National to

Vandell, shows an average increase of 3.1 per cent. The sample range covered rises of zero to 5 per cent.

According to the study, the highest pension rises this year were 5 per cent for pensioners in the schemes run by Ernst & Young, and JW Spear. Two other schemes, at John Lewis and Rover, also awarded rises of more than 4 per cent to their pensioners.

Some schemes guaranteed special additional rises to targeted groups of older pensioners. ICI, for example, awarded from November an extra 1.5 per cent to pre-1974 pensioners.

## Government forecast for growth 'too optimistic'

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

CITY and independent forecasters are unanimous in disputing the Government's Budget forecasts for growth and consumer spending next year, according to a comparison of predictions compiled by the Treasury.

The Government is forecasting 3 per cent growth in gross domestic product next year, powered by a 3.5 per cent rise in consumer spending. But an average of 43 outside forecasts predicts growth of 2.4 per cent and consumer spending of no more than 2.7 per cent. In the case of consumer spending, not a single outside forecast matches the optimism of the Treasury.

The future path of consumer spending is at the core of the current economic debate because it is the component of economic growth that the Treasury is relying on most to deliver its growth forecast. Discussion of consumer spending was heightened by news in the week before Christmas that the savings ratio had fallen sharply in the third quarter to 8.6 per cent from 9.3 per cent, reaching its lowest level since the third quarter of 1990.

Some analysts attributed this partly to the £18 billion bonus paid to customers of the Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society when it was taken over by Lloyd's. This bonus is not included statistically in total personal disposable income, which rose by 0.2 per cent in the third quarter, but could have helped account for a robust rise of 1 per cent in consumer spending.

The prospect of more bank and building society merger bonuses being paid out next year — as well as the £50 electricity rebate from the sale of the National Grid — is one reason for the Treasury's opti-

mism on consumer spending. Another is its assumption that incomes will rise.

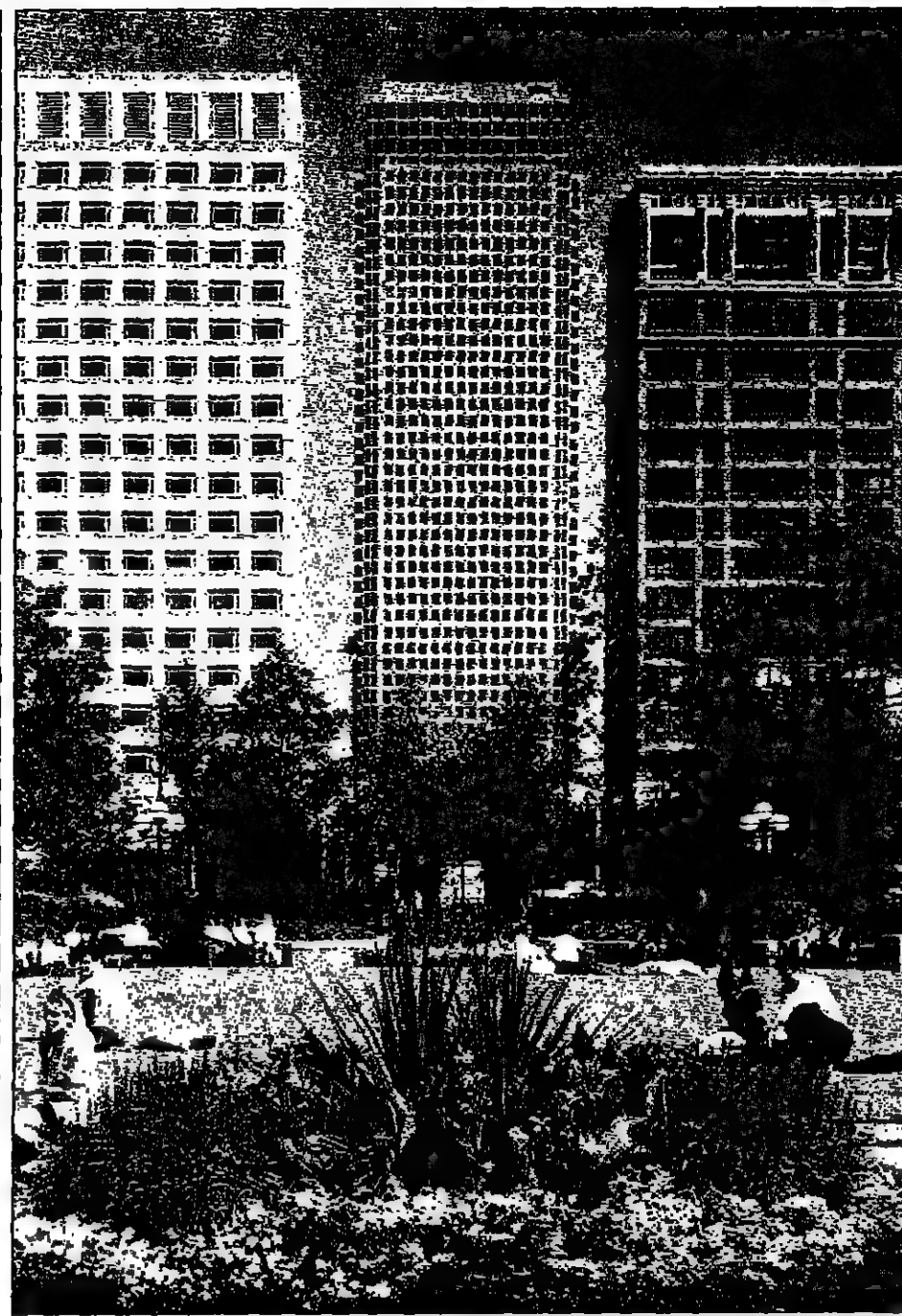
Douglas McWilliams, chief executive of the Centre for Economics and Business Research, agrees broadly with this prognosis although he is still less optimistic than the Treasury, with a forecast of 3 per cent growth in consumer spending next year.

He said that bonuses, the electricity rebate and cuts in taxation and interest rates will combine to produce an unusually large surge in real disposable income. He added that once proper adjustment is made for the cash payments, income will rise next year by a larger amount than in any year since 1989.

However, there are counter-arguments being voiced in the City. Don Smith, of HSBC Markets, said there is a danger that the pain being experienced by British companies has yet to be passed on to the personal sector in the form of lower earnings or job insecurity.

National Accounts for the third quarter showed the financial surplus of industrial and commercial companies had fallen to £2.45 billion, the lowest for two years. Profits were 2.2 per cent down on the second quarter and 5.3 per cent lower than a year ago.

Mr Smith said it is difficult to predict how British companies will respond to the pressure of slow growth. But he pointed out that the flexible labour market means that employment is extremely vulnerable to the economic downturn. He said that it would not take much to push employment growth back into negative territory and that this would have a significant knock-on effect on the consumer.



Bank loans and Jubilee Line commitments remain under new Canary Wharf deal

## Canary sale completed

By Martin Barrkrow

LENDERS to the Canary Wharf Group yesterday completed the sale of the landmark development in London's Docklands to the International Property Corporation (IPC).

Under the agreement the European Investment Bank will maintain its loans to the Canary Wharf development. IPC will assume the £300

million commitment to London Regional Transport for completion of the Jubilee Line extension to the London Underground network.

The Canary Wharf bank lenders announced the sale of the development for £600 million in October when IPC began the process of due diligence.

IPC's partners include Paul

Reichmann, the original developer of Canary Wharf, Prince al-Waleed bin Talal of Saudi Arabia, a nephew of King Fahd, and Michael Price, the US fund manager.

The banks, which took control of the huge development in 1992 after it went into administration, will recover about 95p in the pound of the debts that they are owed.

## Housing hopefuls shot down by Labour

By Caroline Merrell

THE Nationwide Building Society will today announce it expects house prices to increase by 3 per cent next year. Its prediction echoes that of the Halifax, the UK's biggest building society, which said it expected a more modest 2 per cent increase next year.

However, both estimates have drawn the fire of the Labour Party, which says there will be no recovery in house prices in 1996.

Nick Raynsford, Shadow Housing Minister, said: "The independent Organisation for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD) has already said the Government's predictions for the economy in 1996 are far too optimistic. With economic growth faltering — and predicted to be below the OECD average — current hopes of recovery in the housing market in 1996 may prove as elusive as the forecast return of the 'feel-good' factor."

He added: "Those who are predicting any kind of recovery are doing so on very flimsy evidence." He said the number of households, according to figures from UBS Global Research, with negative equity (with loans greater than the value of their houses) increased from 1.2 million to more than 1.4 million in the last quarter of this year. This figure is about 400,000 higher than the Bank of England's estimate, which is more commonly used by analysts.

The high number of households with negative equity is believed to be one of the main factors holding back house price recovery.

The building societies do not have a sparkling track record on guessing the trend of house prices. At the beginning of the year, both the Halifax and the Nationwide were confidently estimating that prices would rise by 2 per cent in 1995. In fact, they fell 1 per cent.

They claim their estimates will be more accurate for 1996 because house prices tend to be linked with earnings. The package of tax cuts delivered by the Government in this year's Budget will increase income, and so house prices should rise accordingly. They also say interest rates could fall again. Gary Marsh, Halifax economist, said: "At the beginning of this year there was a feeling interest rates would rise. This has not happened and we believe interest rates could come down further."

He and other economists said they had misread the market last year because they had underestimated the effect of changes in social security, which cut the amount of state help given to homeowners claiming income support.

Pennington, page 23

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### Insurers escape in year of disasters

THE cost of damage caused by natural disasters, ranging from floods and earthquakes to storms and volcanic eruptions, trebled to \$180 billion this year, according to latest estimates. But in spite of the upsurge in catastrophes, insurers suffered less than in 1994. Worldwide claims payouts fell to \$14 billion in 1995 from \$17 billion in 1994, mainly because insurance cover in the worst-hit regions was comparatively low.

Munich Re, the world's largest reinsurer, said the Kobe earthquake in Japan, which killed more than 6,000 people in January, was the most expensive disaster to date, wreaking about \$100 billion worth of damage. The firm registered about 600 disasters in 1995, compared with 580 in 1994. Floods in Germany, tropical storms in the Caribbean, the United States and east Asia, along with various earthquakes, hailstorms, floods and volcanic eruptions throughout the world, cost further billions of dollars, Munich Re said. "1995 will enter the books as a record year in the history of natural disasters."

### US confidence dips

CONSUMER confidence in America fell in December as the holiday season failed to brighten Americans' outlook on the economy, the Conference Board reported yesterday. The global research and business group said its US consumer confidence index fell to 98.7 from a revised 101.6 reading in November. The widely watched expectations component of the index fell to 91.7 from a revised 92.5 last month. The present situation component slid to 109.2 from a revised 115.3 last time. "Overall, the consumer confidence index has hovered around the 100 mark throughout the year," said Edgar Fiedler, vice-president.

### Crash killed Siebe man

BRIAN McMAHON, the divisional president and chief operating officer of Siebe Diversified Products, was among the 160 people killed in the crash of an American Airlines Boeing 757 in Colombia on December 20, it was disclosed yesterday. Mr McMahon, who started working for Siebe in 1993, was travelling to join his family for Christmas, the company said. "During his time with Siebe, Brian made an enormous contribution to the success of the companies under his control," said Allen Yurko, the managing director of the Siebe group.

### Pensions change urged

THE National Association of Pension Funds (NAPF) has called for a fairer division of pensions on marriage break-up. David Morgan, NAPF vice-chairman, has written to Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, urging him to amend the Family Law Bill. Mr Morgan said: "We need a scheme which will give divorces the retirement income when they need it, not when their former partners need theirs. The Court should be given wider powers so that they can direct that part of the pension should be used to buy a pension for the ex-wife, or ex-husband where appropriate."

### Mark hits Mercedes

MERCEDES-BENZ, the German luxury car maker, expects 1995 group sales to total about DM72 billion, compared with DM70.7 billion the previous year. The subsidiary of Daimler-Benz said the strong mark would burden 1995 results by more than DM1 billion, although profits are expected to rise from the previous year's DM1.85 billion. The company said problems caused by the stronger mark were largely offset by internal measures. Mercedes's 1995 car deliveries total 580,000, compared with 592,356 last year, with truck deliveries of more than 320,000 (290,354).

### Pemberstone buys flats

PEMBERSTONE, the specialist investment and property management group, has made its first acquisition since its shares were floated on the stock market in September. It is paying a total of £11.7 million for First Roman Property Trust, Second Roman Property Trust and Third Roman Property Trust. The companies own 303 flats let predominantly on assured tenancy for sheltered housing, mainly in northwest England and north Wales, and earned £571,000 before tax in the half-year to September 30. New Pemberstone shares will be issued at 66p.

## Delay for China-jet bidders

By Ross Tye, Industrial Correspondent

A DECISION on the hard-fought battle by western aerospace companies to partner China and Korea in building a new 100-seat jet has been postponed until March.

Although executives at the rival bidders, including British Aerospace, had been expected to see a shortlist before the year-end, a spokesman for China Aviation Industries announced yesterday that there would be a three-month delay.

The deferral will heighten the difficulties of Daimler-Benz Aerospace as it struggles

to chart a future for Fokker, its troubled jet subsidiary. Daimler had hoped that victory would enable a production line to be set up at Fokker, while a second production centre in Asia would build identical aircraft.

But AIR, the joint regional aircraft marketing company formed by British Aerospace, Aerospaciale of France and Alenia of Italy countered with an offer to assemble all the aircraft in the Far East. Both Boeing and McDonnell Douglas of America are also com-

peting to partner China Aviation and its collaborator, Korean Commercial Aircraft Development Consortium.

The outcome of the contest will determine how the restructuring of Europe's regional aircraft industry is completed. If one of the European bidders wins, it is expected to form the nucleus of a merged European industry. If Boeing is successful, AIR plans to develop a rival aircraft. In that event, Daimler is expected to throw in its lot with AIR.

## Tokyo shares pass 20,000

By Our City Staff

SHARE prices in Tokyo breached the 20,000 barrier, rising to their highest level in 14 months. The Nikkei stock average of 225 select issues rose 107.04 points, or 0.5 per cent, to end the session at 20,011.76, the first close above the psychologically important 20,000 line since October 13 last year.

"It's significant that the key barometer rose past the psychological resistance point," said Yasuo Ueki, of Nikko Securities Co. After what he described as "a severe year",

Masayoshi Takemura, the Finance Minister, commented: "I will be happy to greet a new year if stock and currency markets reach year-before levels."

At the end of 1994, the Nikkei index was hovering at about 20,000 points, while the dollar was slightly below 100 yen, compared with the present level of about 102.50 yen. Mr Takemura said that the yen was still easing from highs of about 80 yen to the dollar early this year.

Industrial production in Ja-

pan increased 1.3 per cent from the previous month, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) reported yesterday.

The preliminary outcome for November was better than MITI's earlier forecast of a 0.1 per cent decline in the month. The ministry forecast that industrial output in December would rise 0.5 per cent from November, and would increase a further 0.5 per cent in January.

Tempus, page 24

## LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

### LEGAL NOTICES

THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986  
RECEIVED  
NOTICE TO CREDITORS  
Notice is hereby given in pursuance of Section 54(1) of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above-named company will be held at 10.30 am on 11 January 1996 at Price Waterhouse, 15 Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3DF, for the purpose of considering the appointment of a liquidator and for the purpose of ascertaining the claims of the creditors of the company.

19th December 1995  
Lindsay Harrison  
Joint Administrators  
Notice: Creditors whose claims are not submitted to the administrator or to the liquidator will not be paid.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE  
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) made on 28 November 1995 in the matter of the above-named company, for the appointment of a liquidator and for the purpose of ascertaining the claims of the creditors of the company, is hereby confirmed.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES  
TO PLACE NOTICES FOR THE RECORD  
PLEASE TELEPHONE  
0171-782 7344  
FAX: 0171-782 7827

## PA to pay out £19m

A SIX-YEAR wrangle with the taxman has ended in a £19 million payout to shareholders in the Press Association, the national news agency. The special dividend comes

after protracted talks with the Inland Revenue over how much tax was due on the PA's former 41 per cent stake in Reuters, the financial information and news agency. PA's 46 shareholders, mainly national and regional newspaper groups, have received a total of £500 million already for the holding in Reuters, which was floated in 1984. A £20 million provision was made by PA to settle a possible capital gains tax bill on the shares.

Since 1989, when the second batch of Reuters shares was sold, the agency has been in talks with the Revenue over the tax liability. The issue was the presumed value of each Reuters share in March 1982, but before the shares were traded on the stock market.

A compromise had to be reached by the end of this month to make the most of the taxation rules and a deal was struck on December 14.

Letters were sent before Christmas to PA's shareholders, telling them that more than 90 per cent of the tax provision, amounting to £19 million, could be released.

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It is a roll-over this week, so first prize in the Lottery could be as much as £23 million. Now you can enter our exclusive competition for an even better chance of being the lucky winner. The Times has entered 10,000 tickets in Saturday's draw and the prizes will be allocated like this:

- One first prize of 5,000 £1 tickets
- Five runners-up prizes of 1,000 £1 tickets

The Times will hold the randomly generated numbers on computer which will work out if any are winners. If they are, the readers who won Times tickets will be contacted immediately. The lottery competition runs all week and every day we will publish a different question. Today's question is:

Who made an unexpected appearance on Christmas Day?

a) Frank Bough b) Frank Bruno c) Frank Butcher

Phone your answer on the number below, open 24 hours a day and until 3pm on Saturday. All correct answers to all five days' questions will go into the draw and winners will be randomly selected. Normal Times Newspapers rules apply.

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## JANET BUSH 25

No escape as nations succumb to poverty trap



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Geoff Brown on new releases and top films of 1995



## SPORT 34-40

Stewart's dismissal puts England on back foot in Test

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Books 32, 33

# THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY DECEMBER 28 1995

## Supermarkets may plug into power sales

By Ross Tienan, Industrial Correspondent

CONSUMERS could buy their gas and electricity at supermarket checkouts in little more than two years' time, when competition to supply households will be allowed nationally.

Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, said many retail groups were examining the feasibility of entering the market after the removal of local monopolies enjoyed by regional supply companies. The gas and electricity markets must be fully deregulated by April 1998.

This will open up a market of 20 million households worth £8 billion a year. With grocery returns under pressure from a price war, supermarket bosses hope that selling utility services could provide a new source of profits. "All of these chains realise that they have strengths and the resources which could be

of use in the electricity market," Professor Littlechild said. "I think all of the major chains are aware that there will be a possibility there which doesn't exist at the moment." Many have already made their interest plain to Oftec, the electricity regulatory body, he said.

Leading retailers are well aware of the structural changes taking place in power markets, and the opportunities looming, because they are among the chief beneficiaries of the partial opening to competition that has already taken place.

Store chains that used to receive hundreds of bills from separate state-owned electricity boards are now able to buy all their power from a single private sector supplier, selected through a competitive bidding process that has yielded savings of 30 per cent or more.

No new wires or pipes would be needed. Retailers would simply use their purchasing power to increase the amount of energy they buy in bulk at a discount. Energy not used in their own premises could be sold on to consumers, with the retailer paying a fee for carriage to the relevant power distribution or gas pipeline company. Changing supplier would require little more effort by the consumer than signing the contract.

According to the regulator, many chain stores are well placed to sell electricity in the competitive consumer markets now being created. They have the confidence of their customers that they provide good value for money. They are expert at driving a hard bargain with suppliers and passing the benefit on to consumers, trading large volumes on slim profit margins.

And many now have their own credit cards, providing

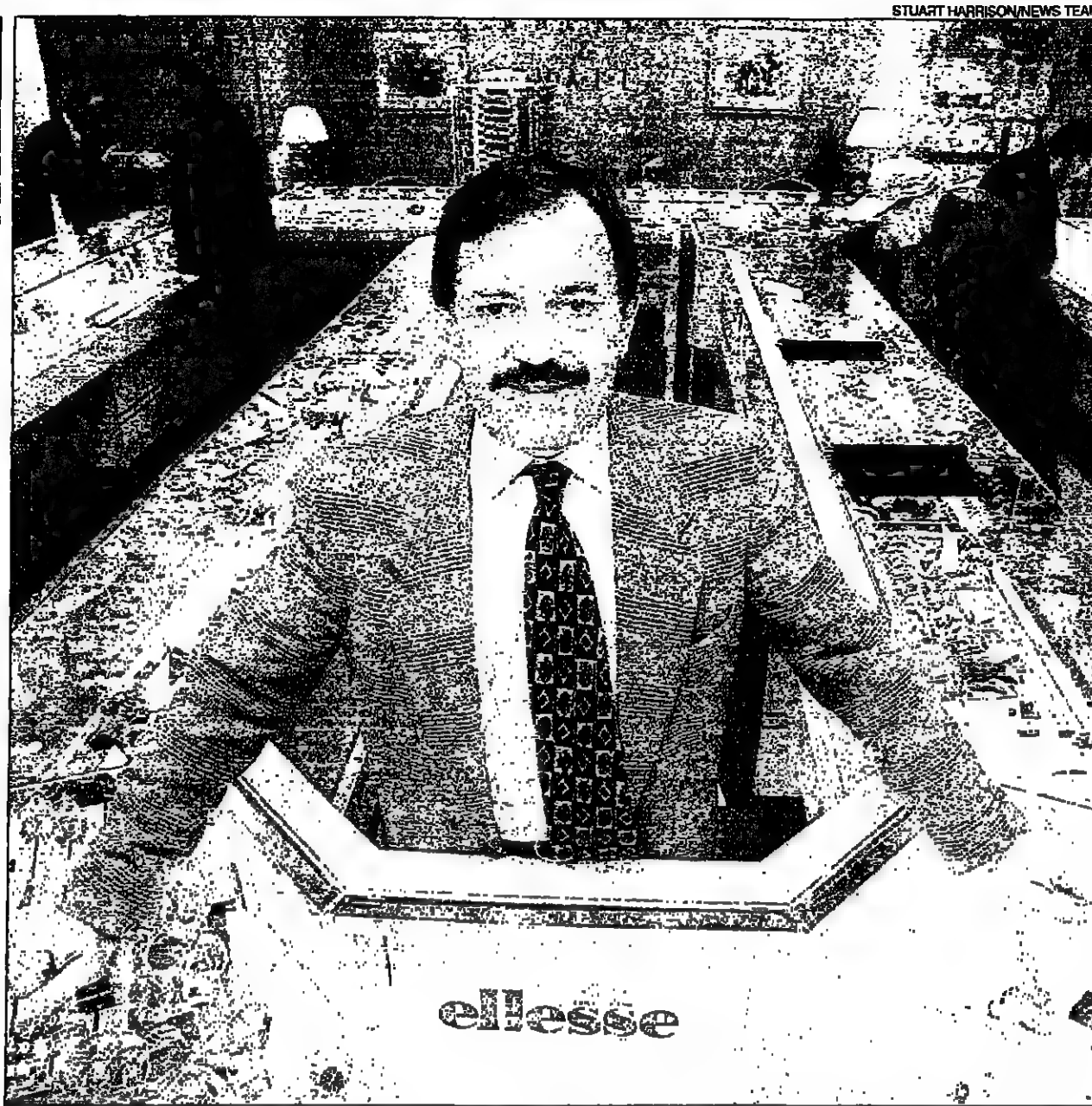
them with knowledge of customers' credit worthiness, and with the staff and systems to handle billing and payments. Some oil and gas companies setting up to compete with British Gas for household customers when competitive trials begin in April 1996 also see store groups as probable competitors. The dangers of the looming free-for-all, in which commodity energy products are sold on price, as well as services, have not been lost on British Gas.

With its own franchise under threat, and a growing expectation that customers will favour a single supplier, the company has already applied for a licence to trade in electricity with a view to offering power to household customers as well as gas.

Professor Littlechild said: "I think at some stage we will see some of the supermarkets and some of the chain stores saying 'Look, we offer the facilities for people to buy food, groceries and also clothing in our stores. Why not offer the possibility of buying gas, electricity and water?' They will be looking for ways to do that."

Some might choose to work with an existing electricity supplier, he said. These could include an electricity generator, or a regional power company, or a regional power company anxious to extend beyond the boundaries of its existing franchise, he said.

The store groups have had some talks with Oftec. They are likely to get a warm reaction if they decide to seek supply licences. "There are opportunities for people with different kinds of backgrounds and resources to move into this market, and I want to encourage that," Professor Littlechild said.



Jurek Piasecki, who says growth has been achieved without discounting and that options are still open on acquisitions

## Glad tidings from Goldsmiths

By Alasdair Murray

GOLDSMITHS, the jewellery company, enjoyed a sparkling Christmas, posting a 16 per cent rise in sales to Christmas Eve.

Like-for-like sales rose 8.7 per cent in December, while over the 11 months to December 24, total sales increased by 18.8 per cent and like-for-like sales rose 7.7 per cent. Shares closed up 2p at 227p.

Jurek Piasecki, chief executive, said that the growth had been achieved without discounting and that margins had risen slightly across the

year. The results are likely to increase the pressure on Signet, formerly Rainers and struggling rivals.

Mr Piasecki said Goldsmiths was still interested in making a bid for Ernest Jones or H Samuel, which are owned by Signet, but that Signet was reluctant to enter into discussions. Goldsmiths is believed to have offered £250 million for the subsidiaries with the backing of venture capital funds.

Goldsmiths, founded in 1778, has 199 branches under

the Goldsmiths and Walker and Hall banners. It is the UK's largest distributor of Rolex, Cartier, Ebel and Omega watches, but has concentrated in recent years on improving sales in higher-margin gold and diamond jewellery. Last year's profits were £3.2 million and analysts are forecasting about £4.2 million this year.

Goldsmiths' figures are likely to provide post-Christmas cheer for the City, which is looking for a strong showing from the retail sector after

a poor autumn performance, with companies such as Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury reporting difficult trading conditions.

Early information suggests that high street sales have grown by between 6 per cent and 9 per cent on last year. The full extent of the Christmas improvement will not be known until companies such as Dixons, Asda and Marks & Spencer unveil their trading statements.

Tempus, page 24

## BUSINESS TODAY

### STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3676.4	(+18.1)
Yield	3.85%	
FT-SE All share	1705.71	(+8.02)
Nikkei	20011.78	(+107.04)
Dow Jones	8115.67	(+5.42)
S&P Composite	615.06	(+0.76)

### US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)
Yield	6.01%	(6.06%)

### LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank	8 3/4%	(8 3/4%)
12th long bill	n/a	(11 1/4%)

### STERLING

New York	1.5600*	(1.5430)
London	1.5601	(1.5403)
DM	2.2311	(2.2250)
FF	7.0720	(7.0250)
SP	1.7977	(1.7946)
Yen	160.20	(157.98)
E Index	83.8	(83.0)

### US DOLLAR

London	1.4288*	(1.4376)
DM	4.8670*	(4.8186)
SP	1.1525*	(1.1573)
Yen	102.78*	(102.30)
E Index	93.7	(94.1)

### TOKYO CLOSING

Yen 100	102.82
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### NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$17.80	(\$17.38)
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### GOLD

London close	\$387.35	(\$387.40)
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\* denotes midday trading price

## Growth doubt

City and independent forecasters are unanimous in disputing the Government's Budget forecasts for 3 per cent growth and a 3.5 per cent rise in consumer spending next year, according to a comparison of predictions compiled by the Treasury. An average of 43 outside forecasters expects growth of 2.4 per cent and consumer spending of no more than 2.7 per cent. Page 22

## Gas hopes

BP shares rose 10p to 545p after the oil giant announced a deal to explore for and to produce gas in the Sahara Desert with Sonatrach, the Algerian oil and gas company. Page 23

## Sterling's Far East surge lifts shares

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

A SUDDEN spurt by the pound in Far Eastern markets perked up both shares and bonds in London yesterday, but dealers said that not too much should be read into this outbreak of optimism in this holiday trading.

The pound jumped on its index against a basket of currencies, ending the day at 83.6, up from 83.0 before Christmas. It added more than a penny against the mark to DM2.2310 in late trading and was nearly two cents up on the dollar, which was quoted at \$1.5602 to the pound.

Most of this sharp upward movement came overnight before the London market opened. In Singapore, there were varying rumours of speculative buying by Middle Eastern traders, Swiss-based funds and an American hedge fund.

Traders in London said that the extra interest in sterling may be tied to the start on January 2 of the new gilt repo market in London. This will enable investors to lend gilt-edged stock in return for cash, which can then be used to finance other kinds of trading. Analysts believe that there will be strong interest in the opportunities of the new market, which should increase demand for sterling.

Gilts yesterday rallied by as much as a full point in reaction to sterling's rise and to stronger bonds overseas, but, again, traders said that trading was very thin and that movements were therefore exaggerated.

The gilt market is waiting for today's announcement by the Bank of England of its schedule for forthcoming gilt auctions. There will also be interest in today's publication of minutes of the November monetary meeting between Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, since when base rates have been cut by a quarter point.

On the stock market, the FT-SE 100 index closed 18.1 points higher, at 3676.4, just a few points below its all-time closing high.

## Hopes of payout grow as Forte confirms deal

By Christine Buckley

CITY hopes that Forte may offer a special payout to shareholders in a final defence against Granada sharpened when the hotels group confirmed the sale of its roadside businesses to Whitbread in a £1.05 billion deal.

The sale would leave Forte with gearing of about 9 per cent — a level from which it could sustain a substantial dividend to shareholders. Net proceeds from the sale are likely to exceed £850 million.

Expectations are growing among analysts that Forte will promise a package of shareholder giveaways made possible on the sale of the roadside businesses, which include Little Chef, Happy Eater, Welcome Break and Travelodge, in its final defence document, due by next Tuesday.

The price struck for the businesses topped City valuations which Forte had earmarked for demerger earlier this month. One analyst said: "This move will be hard to beat. The sale implements action identified by Granada and massively reduces debt."

Under takeover rules, Sir Rocco Forte, chairman, could not comment on the contents of the defence document. He said the sale would leave the company better placed to focus its resources. "We will be purely a hotels group and well placed to take advantage of the upturn in the market."

The move switched the spotlight to Granada amid a growing belief that it would not raise its £3.3 billion unwelcome bid. Pressure is on the

leisure group to lift its offer. Gerry Robinson, Granada's chief executive, said: "Forte's break-up plan is an admission of its management's failure to obtain a reasonable return on its assets." The sale also marks a big step for Whitbread in its shift from its traditional brewing base. However, Peter Jarvis, chief executive, denied it was moving to pull out of brewing altogether.

Pennington, page 23



Sir Rocco, left, with Peter Jarvis after the sale was confirmed

## Job fears 'hitting economic growth'

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

WIDESPREAD job insecurity is now a brake on economic growth and hampering the Government's electoral prospects, new poll evidence suggests today.

The findings of the Harris poll, suggesting most people believe their job is likely to be less secure in the coming year, specifically shows that both the housing market and consumer spending are likely to be hit by concern about employment.

The poll, conducted for the TUC, shows that 52 per cent of employees in Britain expect their jobs to be less secure in the coming year. Job insecurity affects all age groups, but especially those aged 35-44, and all social classes, with concern greatest in the highest social AB classes.

The findings suggest that key groups of voters — especially in the battleground of so-called Middle England that the Conservatives and the Labour Party will contest extensively at the general election — are nervous about their own jobs and so not feeling good about the economy.

Three-quarters of the representative sample of 675 employees, questioned by phone between December 15 and December 17, expect to be put under more pressure at work. Again, pressure is felt most strongly among the middle-aged and the AB social classes.

In each case, people living in London, another key election battleground, feel insecurity at work most strongly.

John Monks, TUC General Secretary, said: "These are key groups which the Conservatives must win over before the next election, but their programme to scrap basic rights at work is doing the opposite."

The survey suggests that job insecurity is feeding directly through into people's main economic decisions.

Questioned about their action on the basis of their own or their family's employment position, as many as 73 per cent of those surveyed said it would make them less likely even to consider moving house.

Three-fifths said that it would restrict them from making major household purchases.

## Fisons chief executive wins £2.5m payoff

By Alasdair Murray

STUART WALLIS, the departing chief executive of Fisons, the pharmaceutical company, has negotiated a £2.5 million payoff from its new owner, the French-controlled Rhône-Poulenc Rorer.

Mr Wallis, 50, has also been approached by several companies seeking his services and is currently considering an offer to be the non-executive chairman of a service sector

company looking to float in the next three years. Mr Wallis is also believed to be seeking other directorships.

The bulk of the payoff package comes from 890,000 share options granted in November 1994 at 126p, which, when sold at the bid price of 265p, will yield a profit of £1.2 million.

Mr Wallis also receives two years' pay and a bonus, based on the performance of Fisons shares, worth about £740,000. His annual salary

immediately before Rhône-Poulenc Rorer's bid was £315,000. Mr Wallis is eligible to draw a pension worth about £45,000 as soon as he departs, even though he served only 16 months with Fisons. The total pension package is believed to be worth about £600,000.

Fisons has a history of big payoffs, which have been criticised by the City as unrelated to performance. Cedric Scroggs, the former chief executive, who was sacked in 1993, received a

total payoff worth £750,000. However, Mr Wallis is facing no such criticism: under his leadership, the market worth of Fisons has risen from £740 million to £1.83 billion, the price paid by Rhône-Poulenc Rorer earlier this year. When Mr Wallis joined in 1994, the share price was near a ten-year low of 105p, having fallen from more than 500p since 1991. Mr Wallis's strategy of selling non-core operations revitalised the stock market value of Fisons.

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□ Make or break time for Granada □ Writing on the wall for the publishers □ A snowstorm of housing forecasts

## Forte's lightning roadside break

□ THERE have been a fair few Christmases ruined by the week-end's untimely leak of Whitbread's purchase of the vulgar roadside and motorway catering bits of Forte, which would leave Sir Rocco to run his decidedly upmarket hotels.

Forte's advisers have been scampering around trying to present the deal as a favourable one, even if the timing was forced on the company by the Granada bid. Granada have been well and truly taken unawares by the speed of the Whitbread strike.

Shareholders should be pleased, because the news has clarified the position wonderfully. If the Granada offer or a higher one succeeds, then the Whitbread purchase is off. Investors can therefore take whatever mix and match of Granada cash and shares they care for or are allowed, that mix deciding whether they back Gerry Robinson and his team's skills in running the enlarged Forte group better than the incumbents, led by Sir Rocco.

If Granada fails, Forte shareholders are left with equity in a pure hotels group owning some of the better brands and with no debt. Added credibility would be gained by the parachuting in from outside of a new chief executive not connected with the Forte family.

Forte is getting a headline

figure of £1.05 billion, but this sum will drop to below £1 billion once various loose ends have been tied up, including buying out minority holders in some of the businesses and sorting out those premises held on sale and leaseback.

Less than £100 million will be payable in tax, and the resulting cash would cut borrowings to just £250 million and leave gearing below 10 per cent. Further tidying up — disposing of the Savoy stake, worth £220 million, and the eventual sale of White Hart hotels worth approaching £100 million — would then wipe out debt.

If only it were that simple. There is, alas, the small matter of the Danegeld that Forte will have to pay in the form of special dividends, share buybacks or other bribes to its own shareholders to keep them loyal. These have so far only been whispered but must be quantified in the next Forte document, expected on Tuesday, the first working day of 1996.

City institutions, rightly or wrongly, want some of those proceeds of sale diverted their

way, and they should remember to thank the Granada camp who forced the action upon Sir Rocco. This will be little comfort to Granada, now faced with the awkward decision of how much more it can afford to pay.

With a Forte share price only just ahead of the terms on offer, the indication is that not much more will be on offer. After its abrupt share price decline since the bid was launched, Granada is desperate not to be seen to overpay. The group would anyway have enormous difficulty underwriting a bid anywhere near the 380p-a-share area now being dreamed of by the City.

### Sad chapter for the book trade

□ IT IS getting to that time of the year when one can start spotting the winners and losers of the Christmas shopping rush. However the jewellery trade may claim to be doing, the reckoning is that one of the losers must be the book trade.

The disintegration of the Net Book Agreement this autumn

### PENNINGTON



has not been the swift stimulus that was meant to halt the long decline of book sales.

The first warning came a fortnight ago, when as part of Pearson's raft of bad news the venerable Penguin imprint said times were pretty rotten in the bookshops, blaming the trend towards lower retail margins. That was started, of course, by the disappearance of the NBA.

Enthusiasts for doing away with the old price-fixing agreement had suggested that its abolition would pave the way for a renaissance for the book trade. Consumers who balked at paying up to £20 for an item they might consume in an evening would be encouraged by lower prices. Others, drawn into the

shops by the bargains on offer, would be newly converted to the pleasures of the written word.

It didn't happen. As little as 5 per cent of publishers' lists of new books are discounted, nowhere near enough to create a sea change in public perceptions. Plenty of copies of Delia Smith and her ilk walked off the shelves, but at prices that offered little real profit for seller or publisher alike — the saintly Delia is going for half price, for example. If anything, such bargain hunting may have drawn customers away from the full-price titles.

Other factors have exacerbated the trade's problems. Stock levels have been falling for years, to the extent that one can no longer expect to walk into a decent bookshop and find the majority of the oeuvre of any middle-ranking novelist on display. This trend has been accelerated by a move to centralised buying by big chains such as WH Smith, which cuts the size of orders from the publishers.

Firms such as Penguin are to some extent protected by their range of classics, but the shelf life

of the average new title has been falling, and payback often has to come within the year. This is bad news for some of the newer, pushier breed of publishers, the huge majority of whose lists are now effectively fashion items.

### Lies, statistics and house prices

□ WHEN surveying the blizzard of surveys, prognostications and plain guesses on the state of the 1996 housing market now on display, it is worth keeping two facts firmly in mind.

The first is that they just don't know. House prices are harder to forecast than virtually any other economic statistic. As in sub-atomic physics, the market is weirdly affected by the presence of the observer, and one of the most important uncertainties is the expectation among house-owners of what prices will do next.

The second is that they all have their axes to grind. The mortgage providers are looking for 2 per cent inflation (Halifax) or 3 per cent (Nationwide). They have

their own reasons for puffing the market, but such lowly forecasts do not look like heralding much of a boom. If the Halifax is right, and City forecasts of 2.7 per cent inflation are likewise, then owners will have lost money again in real terms on their homes. Last year the Halifax was wrong, a 2 per cent forecast rise translating into an actual 1 per cent fall.

The Labour Party has its own reasons for piling on the gloom. The party has research showing which marginal constituencies have been worst hit by house price falls, and it will be out there terrifying potential voters in those areas. In the real world, homes by the end of 1996 will be just as habitable as at the start of it, given a little wear and tear — except for those unfortunate souls required to move, but trapped by negative equity.

### Troubl'at t'millpond

TROUBLE, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. The boardroom at Yorkshire Water should indeed be in uproar, even if standpipes are still only a threat for its consumers. But plans to find a new chairman to succeed Sir Gordon Jones, a youthful 70 in 18 months time, do not amount to the sort of corporate blood-letting critics of the country's most hated water company had in mind.

## BP shares soar to record after \$3.5bn Algerian deal

By CARL MORTSHED



Deal gives BP's Sir David Simon a foothold in gas market

BP shares raced to a new high yesterday as the City seized the first opportunity to assess a \$3.5 billion gas deal clinched over the Christmas weekend.

The shares rose 10p to 545p after the oil company said that the agreement with Sonatrach, the Algerian state oil company, to develop gas reserves deep in the Sahara, will increase BP's worldwide gas production by 30 per cent.

The deal with Sonatrach also gives BP, whose chairman is Sir David Simon, a foothold in the growing European gas market. A joint venture company will sell some 10 billion cubic metres of gas per year into Southern Europe via the Transmed pipeline into Italy and another pipeline, currently under construction, will transport gas via Morocco into Spain.

John Browne, BP exploration director, said it was a landmark agreement: "It is the first major gas joint venture, a foreign company has signed with Sonatrach, the sole gas producer in Algeria for the past 30 years."

Oil analysts thought the

terms of the production and marketing deal was largely favourable to BP. The British company will take 30 per cent of net profit after expenses of the gas sold. Under a typical production sharing contract, the foreign oil company is likely to earn 15 per cent of the net profit.

Political risk is likely to be the reason for the higher than normal profit share. Algeria has been in civil war since the government cancelled elections in 1992 which the Islamist opposition were expected to win. Since then, armed opposition groups have waged war against the Government and have targeted foreigners, killing two pipeline workers last year.

Both the Opposition and the Government understand the importance of oil and gas which underpins the Algerian economy and makes up over 90 per cent of foreign revenues. In April, the Government cordoned off huge areas of the desert and is believed to be in negotiations with other foreign oil companies, including Exxon.

Sonatrach already exports some 30 billion cubic metres of gas, mainly to Italy by pipeline and liquefied gas by ship to Spain, France and Belgium.

Tempest, page 24

### Dispute ends at Tate & Lyle subsidiary

THE long-running dispute over working conditions at Staley, Tate & Lyle's US subsidiary, ended yesterday after union members voted to accept the latest offer (Alasdair Murray writes).

Fifty-six per cent voted to accept the offer although it was not recommended by their union, the United Paperworkers International Union. The new contracts include improved severance pay and pension rights, union representation and a no-strike clause. Union members said they will return to work from January.

The dispute began three years ago, after Larry Pillard, Staley chief executive, shortly to take over from Sir Neil Shaw as chief executive of T&L, launched a programme to improve productivity. T&L shares rose 6p to 468p.

## Power firms get £680m sale boost

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

ELECTRICITY shareholders are likely to be in line for more payouts next year after their companies swept up about £680 million from the sale of a hydroelectricity division.

Proceeds from the sale of First Hydro exceeded expectations after Mission Energy, of the US, outbid rivals that included Scotland's Hydro-Electric. The regional electricity companies, which have this year passed millions of pounds to their shareholders in special dividends and other returns, are not outlining plans for their cash, but analysts expect similar actions from the companies, which have pledged to boost shareholder returns and gear up their balance sheets.

First Hydro, which operates hydroelectricity plants in Wales, had been part of the National Grid, which was

jointly owned by all the regional electricity companies before its flotation this month.

The cash returns for the companies, which had differing stakes in the business, are considerable. The highest beneficiaries include Southern Electric, which received £74.5 million from its 10.95 per cent interest, London Electricity (£71 million from 10.46 per cent) and Midlands Electricity (£62.4 million from 9.17 per cent). Seeboard netted £50 million from its 7.3 per cent and Northern Electric £44 million from its 6.47 per cent.

The price paid for First Hydro, which was £652.5 million, with the remainder of the benefit to the electricity companies coming from its cash balances, was much higher than the City's initial expectations, by which the price had been pitched at £350 million.

### Codelco sues metal firm after losses

CODELCO, Chile's state-owned copper combine, which lost \$170 million through futures trading in 1993, is suing Sogemim, a London metal firm, to try to regain some of its losses (Colin Campbell writes).

The suit comes after two years of investigations into trading on the futures market by Juan Pablo Davila, a former Codelco trader, against whom fraud charges were laid last July. The copper scandal rocked Chile, and Codelco's then-president resigned.

Juan Villalaz, Codelco's new president, said that Chile was determined to "discover the truth and punish those who are guilty", but conceded that Codelco does not expect to recover all of its losses.

Chilean authorities say funds connected with the copper futures deals have been traced to banks in unidentified tax havens in the Caribbean.

## Nabisco fearful of priests' crusade

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

CAPITALISM makes strange bedfellows.

RJR Nabisco, the tobacco and foods conglomerate, was beginning to think it may have fought off the assault by two of America's most feared corporate raiders, Carl Icahn and Bennet LeBow. The two financiers want to spin off the

food from the tobacco interests, but RJR has successfully stalled their resolution in the courts.

Until, that is, two small groups of Roman Catholic priests popped up with an independent spin-off proposal of their own. The priests own a total of 980 shares but,

unfortunately for RJR, their proposal has to be taken just as seriously as that of Icahn and LeBow, who own 4.8 per cent of the entire company.

The priests are as surprised as anyone at their new role as allies of two such red-blooded capitalists. The Rev Michael Cosby, a member of the

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, and a brother of the Capuchin Franciscan order in Milwaukee, said: "If a celibate can use the phrase, sometimes you end up with strange bed partners."

Mr LeBow, who does not wear his religious convictions on his sleeve, remarked: "Interest in an immediate spin-off is clearly non-denominational." But while Mr Icahn and Mr LeBow want the spin-off because they smell profits, the priests support it on the moral grounds that a wicked tobacco company should not be linked to a perfectly good food company.

RJR has had to take this new threat seriously. If the Icahn-LeBow resolution fails against the company's legal challenge, shareholders will still be able to vote on the priests' proposal at an annual meeting in April. RJR has already fired off a complaint to the Securities and Exchange Commission and has tried unsuccessfully to persuade the priests to drop their proposal.

The embattled company senses a formidable combination of interests it may not be able to beat. "If you're a shareholder with a heart, you'd want to vote with the priests," said Sarah Teslik, executive director of the Council of Institutional Investors. "If you're an investor with a pocket-book, you'd want to vote with LeBow and Icahn. RJR's horse-trading suggests they are scared to death of the spin-off proposal."

It would be ironic if RJR Nabisco, once the target of the biggest and most notorious management buyout of all time, was finally broken up by a group of priests who disapproved of smoking.

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# ACCOUNTANCY

## Steering group on tax vital

David Brodie advocates taking action now to guard standards

If you fancy running your own business, you could look at setting up shop as a tax adviser, helping the public with their tax returns. Indeed, you could undercut the big accountancy firms, with their expensive overheads, and it could be a nice little earner.

It is still not widely appreciated that — in spite of increasing regulation of the accountancy profession — absolutely anyone can set up as a tax adviser, regardless of qualifications or experience.

TaxAid provides free advice to people with tax problems who cannot afford to pay for help and several of our clients have, in more prosperous times, employed tax professionals. Last year, 62 clients sought help from us in resolving the consequences of misconduct by former advisers.

Complaints ranged from negligence in failing to deal with appeals or returns on time, to incompetence evidenced by fundamental errors in tax computations, to discrepancies with clients' records and the occasional fraud. These cases comprised 4 per cent of our work which, if extrapolated nationwide, suggests a big problem. This view has been echoed by Elizabeth Filkin, the Revenue Adjudicator.

In her recent report, she said: "We drew attention in last year's report to the poor quality of service we had seen provided to some complainants. We have continued to see worrying examples of apparently poor practice."

It is generally accepted by all those working in the tax field that there are practitioners whose conduct falls below acceptable standards, and poor practice is not limited to unqualified practitioners. Indeed, there are many former Revenue employees now in private practice providing a far more proficient specialist tax service than some "qualified" individuals.

So why has nothing been done? Perhaps because historically no one has seen it as their problem. The Revenue has always taken a neutral line and says it will work with any agent whom the taxpayer appoints — although it is known that local tax offices do have informal "blacklists" of dodgy practitioners. The traditional view of the professional bodies has been that the public should seek advice from their own members, who have passed examinations and are subject to the disciplinary regime of their institute. A related argument has been



David Brodie wants regulation before problems arise

that people should be free to appoint who they like. But the choices facing someone appointing a tax adviser are complex. More importantly, the issue can no longer be ducked with the impending introduction of self-assessment in 1996-97. In spite of

government denials, many will be consulting an adviser for the first time. Unregulated "tax shops" will inevitably mushroom, staffed by people with good computers but little understanding of tax.

In the absence of regulation, problems will spiral, leading

to public demands for change. Any resulting scheme, introduced speedily, could saddle all tax professionals — including members of the professional bodies — with a much more bureaucratic and costly regime than if they had taken the initiative in the first place.

Faced by this scenario, TaxAid has published a report, sponsored by the Inland Revenue Staff Federation, which explores the issues in detail and looks at the solutions adopted in other countries. Written by Sue Green of Bristol University, the report recommends the formation of a steering group to take the issue forward as a matter of urgency. The report has been welcomed by the Chartered Institute of Taxation, which describes itself as "the leading professional body in the UK concerned solely with taxation". It says that any new regime should be independent of the Revenue.

The tax faculty of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the other leading player, has not been as enthusiastic. It fears the costs of any new system, but says it may change its views if it is apparent that incompetent or dishonest advice is a greater problem than hitherto realised. Copies of the report are available free by writing to Sue Green, Dept of Economics, University of Bristol, 8 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1TN. The author is director of TaxAid.

## Blood, sweat and accountancy at PW

IT IS the season of unused book tokens. And what better to do with them than buy a history of Price Waterhouse? I mean it. The book, in spite of its slightly ponderous title, *True and Fair — A History of Price Waterhouse*, is a rattling good read.

Take Sammy Price, one of the founding fathers, who was born the eleventh child of a Bristol potter in 1821. The other half of the founding names, Edwin Waterhouse, was said to have had "the greatest admiration for him, not only as an accountant but as a pugilist. If he ever saw a fight going on, nothing could stop him from diving in and having a good time. In the days of the Fenian riots in the 1830s, on several occasions he turned up to the office in a very dishevelled and somewhat bloodstained condition".

Or you could use the excellent maps and research to retrace the Victorian network of the embryonic accountancy profession. The key to the growth of accountancy in London was the location of the bankruptcy court in Basinghall Street, with nearly all the fledgling profession's work in what was seen as the unsavoury business of sorting out the affairs of bankrupt companies.

To judge from the maps, William Welch Deloitte had the office by far the closest to the court. But as Edgar Jones, author of the book, points out, the success of what became Price Waterhouse was due to arriving slightly late on the scene. While other firms remained insolventy based, Price and Waterhouse concentrated on the new business of auditing. They caught the railway boom and never looked back. The income was phenomenal, as indeed it has been throughout the firm's history. It is only a pity that the earnings figures charted in the book cease at 1975.

There are serious points and parallels to be drawn from the book as well. The profession's greatest period was probably the 1920s and for Price Waterhouse their greatest asset was Sir Gilbert Garnesey. Described in the popular press as "the wizard of accountancy" he was, says Jones, "almost without rival in the City as an accountant of popular esteem".

This is the period when the profession was blessed with people who blended supreme technical ability with administrative brilliance and enormous flair at getting the work in. Garnesey was probably the greatest at

combining these elements. But overwork got him. He died in 1932 just before taking up the position of senior partner. His estate, Jones records, "was valued at £151,466 gross, a substantial sum by the standards of the day".

Then, as now, great growth also brought scandals. The Royal Mail Steam Packet case in 1931 was the most famous. The company had relied on secret transfers of reserves to make it appear profitable. It went bust. The dominant chairman and the Price Waterhouse auditor, Harold Morland, went on trial accused of publishing false statements.

Morland argued that the balance sheet was true and fair. Counsel asked him: "It is very important for a shareholder to know what current earnings his company is making?" To which Morland replied: "I do not see why." Both were acquitted. Morland's wife rang the court before the verdict to ask whether he was likely to be late for dinner that evening. "Yes, madam," said his solicitor. "I should think about 12 months late."

In spite of the acquittal, the trial was a setback for the profession and gradually it retreated into an insular world of technical argument. Referring to two senior partners in the postwar years, Jones says: "Neither sought innovation. Neither saw themselves as businessmen or as men who were running a commercial enterprise for profit."

Those words have a ring about them. They are the sort of concept condemned in the 1980s as the firms went for growth. Then, as in Garnesey's day, it all ended in the courts.

There is a need to break this circle. At the conference with which Price Waterhouse celebrated publication of the book, Professor Geoffrey Whittington argued that accountancy is "still an adolescent profession". He thought the sheer multitude of services it offered showed that clearly. But in the future, he argued, quality would be more important than quantity.

Or as Jones writes: "The modern image of a successful accountant is a person who is assertive, committed, technically expert and ambitious. The contrast with those unqualified Victorian progenitors who congregated in City bars waiting for lucrative insolvency commissions to fall into their laps is sharp. True and Fair, by Edgar Jones, is published by Hamish Hamilton at £25.



ROBERT BRUCE

### A change of hat for PW man

THE wearing of two hats at once can confuse a person. Last week, the *Money Programme* did a brief item on the move by firms such as Price Waterhouse towards setting up limited liability partnerships in Jersey. Imagine informed viewers' surprise when the spokesman appearing for the English ICA turned out to be one Graham Ward, who also happens, though the caption on the screen failed to mention it, to be a partner at

Price Waterhouse. There was even greater surprise when this institute spokesman was asked to comment on an aspect of Price Waterhouse's actions. "I wouldn't know about that," said Ward. Some viewers claimed to detect a faint smile on his face.

### Takeaway pies

SCANDAL is afoot at the headquarters of the English ICA. All the goodwill of

Christmas was set aside as questions of theft were aired beneath the holly and the tinsel. The press conference to announce the proposals for a merger between the English ICA and CIMA, the management accounting body, was conducted in a spirit of jolly seasonal bonhomie. And Brian Currie, the deputy president, ended it with an invitation to join him for mince pies. The problem was that the trolley outside the

door was bare. As a spokeswoman succinctly put it: "They'd been stolen."

### To coin a phrase

THE card of the season was undoubtedly that from CA Magazine, the Scots ICA business magazine. It was called the "three years of solid economic growth Christmas card" and claimed to be so cost-effective that the magazine was able to refund 50p of

fixed to the back of each card. Inside the card, one Penny Prim gave interesting advice on things to do with your 50p. The coin, of course, was missing. But a helpline number for just such emergencies was available. On that Ms Prim was informing callers that they were sad old skinflints.

THE devil, of course, is in the detail. The *Inland Revenue* report, The Path To Tax Simplification, runs to an admirably brief 43 pages. But the background papers total 181.

ROBERT BRUCE

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### Firemaster

Salary Under Review

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced serving Officers. Applicants should be Corporate Members of the Institution of Fire Engineers and have attended the Brigade command course. The post falls vacant in March following the retirement of the current postholder.

Conditions of Service are in accordance with the National Joint Council for Fire Brigades and any local conditions determined by the Fire Authority. Please quote ref FRA/17/T.

Application forms are available from the Department of Personnel and Management Services, Fife Regional Council, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT or by telephoning (01592) 413565 or (01592) 416140 (ansaphone outwith office hours) where completed forms should be returned not later than Friday 19 January 1996. Please quote appropriate reference.

Working for Equality

Applications from people with disabilities will be particularly welcomed

FIFE REGIONAL COUNCIL

### GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

Compagnie Générale de Géophysique is one of the world's leading Geophysical Companies and our London office seeks additional staff in the following departments:-

The Research and Development team of our London office wishes to recruit:

### RESEARCH GEOPHYSICISTS

Successful applicants will be self-motivated individuals who can play a leading role in the formulation and delivery of innovative seismic processing techniques. Candidates must be educated to at least PhD level in a subject of relevance to seismic data processing. Positions are available at either an intermediate or senior grade depending on the experience and background of the candidate.

### RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Candidates must have a strong technical background in areas of mathematics and physics of relevance to seismic data processing, and should be educated to at least MSc level. Successful applicants will provide processing, programming and general technical support for the activities of the London R&D group.

The Imaging and Inversion team is now seeking a number of experienced geophysicists to work on complex imaging, acoustic impedance inversion and AVO studies.

### SENIOR GEOPHYSICIST/S

Candidates should be graduates with experience in at least one of the above areas and be familiar with all aspects of 3D processing, preferably gained on interactive systems. The senior position requires a highly-motivated self-starter, capable of leading complex projects, having strong technical abilities and well developed communication skills.

### INTERPRETATION GEOPHYSICIST

We are looking for a graduate interpretation geophysicist with at least 3 years experience, preferably gained in an oil company exploration environment, to work on model building and interpretation for imaging and inversion. Knowledge of *IntegralPlus* would be an advantage. Additional skills in well log analysis and geostatistics are desirable.

Please write with full personal and career details to:

The Personnel Department, CGG House, 4 Dukes Green Avenue, Feltham, Middlesex TW14 0LR



MAKE AN

# IMPACT

IN BUSINESS RE-ENGINEERING

Computacenter is the UK's leading independent provider of distributed IT systems and services. Since its formation in 1981 the company's revenue has grown to more than twice the size of its nearest competitor, and are still growing at around 25% a year. Our work continues to have a major influence on the future of personal computing, and, in turn, on how large corporate and government organisations conduct their business. Much of our success can be attributed to our ability to manage change — continually evolving and re-structuring our operation in order to meet its expanding needs and changing priorities. To that effect we are looking for individuals to join our highly professional business re-engineering project team. The team's task is to investigate the company's business, assess, anticipate their needs, and introduce new systems, methods and structures to support growth.

Opening from St Albans, this is a project-based role in which you will interface with staff and operational management across a broad range of business areas and geographic locations. To succeed you will need to be an excellent communicator, probably aged in your late 20's and an MBA, ideally with some experience of change management or business consultancy. Highly computer literate, you will have excellent analytical skills and a positive, enthusiastic approach. For the right combination of skills, experience and personality, the role offers a high profile and outstanding career prospects. If you think you can make the right impact, please write with CV, quoting ref ST/66, to Judith Adamson at Computacenter, Computacenter House, 181-183 Broad Street, London SE1 6BL. Tel: 0171-593 4955. Fax: 0171-401 3326.

World city.  
World identity.  
World vision.

The London Tourist Board and Convention Bureau is the official tourist and visitor organisation for Greater London. A private company, its mission is to promote London as the single greatest city in the world for both business and leisure visitors and to increase revenue from tourism. In representing its membership, it must ensure that the industry acts in a co-ordinated way working with national and local government to develop the Capital and influence national tourism policies.

## Managing Director

Excellent Salary and Benefits Package

A uniquely challenging role has arisen for an experienced senior manager with the ideas and know-how to firmly establish London as the tourist capital of the world. These couldn't be a more exciting time to join this vibrant company, as the capital will be launching its first ever co-ordinated marketing programme in the new year. The job holder's prime task will be to maximise the impact of this initiative world-wide and to win industry funding for it.

In this high profile and varied position, reporting directly to the Chairman of the Board, you will carry out a wide range of other tasks to further London's tourist industry. This role requires a visionary leader, who can demonstrate a record of success and innovation. With a business qualification (probably a degree) and extensive senior management experience in a service industry (preferably travel or tourism), you will need sophisticated communication skills and a good understanding of the workings and structure of national and local government. Complementing these will be a strong and outgoing personality and the confidence and presence to inspire, motivate, persuade and negotiate in the situation demands.

If you believe you have the skills to make London the centre of attention, please send your CV to: Mrs Judith Adamson, CIO/The Managing Director, London Tourist Board & Convention Bureau, 26 Grosvenor Gardens, Victoria, London SW1W 0DU.

The London Tourist Board and Convention Bureau is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all.



## Prices squeezed higher in thin trading

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>BANKS</b>							
267.7	217.7	217.7	ABN-AMRO	267.7	+0.5	0.2	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Barclays	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	HSBC	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Paribas	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Société Générale	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Union Bank	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Westminster	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Yorkshire	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Scotland	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Ireland	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Wales	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Cyprus	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Greece	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Italy	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Japan	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Korea	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Spain	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Sweden	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Switzerland	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Taiwan	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Thailand	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Vietnam	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of China	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of India	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Australia	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of New Zealand	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of South Africa	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Argentina	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Brazil	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Chile	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Colombia	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Costa Rica	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Cuba	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Ecuador	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of El Salvador	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Guatemala	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Honduras	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Mexico	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Nicaragua	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Panama	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Paraguay	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Peru	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Puerto Rico	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Uruguay	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Venezuela	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Zimbabwe	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>DISTRIBUTORS</b>							
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of America	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Canada	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of France	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Germany	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Hong Kong	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of India	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Japan	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Korea	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Spain	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Sweden	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Switzerland	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Taiwan	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Thailand	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Vietnam	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of China	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of India	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Australia	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of New Zealand	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of South Africa	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Argentina	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Brazil	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Chile	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Colombia	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Costa Rica	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Cuba	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Ecuador	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of El Salvador	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Guatemala	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Honduras	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Mexico	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Nicaragua	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Panama	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Paraguay	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Peru	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Puerto Rico	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Uruguay	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Venezuela	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Zimbabwe	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1

1995	High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
<b>BREWERIES</b>							
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of America	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Canada	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of France	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Germany	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Hong Kong	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of India	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Japan	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Korea	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Spain	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Sweden	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Switzerland	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Taiwan	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Thailand	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Vietnam	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of China	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of India	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Australia	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of New Zealand	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of South Africa	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Argentina	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Brazil	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Chile	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Colombia	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Costa Rica	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Cuba	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Ecuador	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of El Salvador	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Guatemala	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Honduras	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Mexico	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Nicaragua	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Panama	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Paraguay	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Peru	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Puerto Rico	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Uruguay	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Venezuela	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1
10.4	10.4	10.4	Bank of Zimbabwe	10.4	+0.1	1.0	10.1

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# THE TIMES CITY DIARY

## Branson battle for film seats

WHATEVER else Richard Branson may have received for Christmas, he didn't get planning permission from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to increase the number of screens and seats at Virgin's MGM cinema in Fulham Road.

The Environment Department planning inspector has dismissed an appeal by MGM Cinemas that the council had acted improperly when it failed to determine the planning application within the prescribed time limit.

Branson wanted to increase the number of screens from five to eight, and the seating capacity from 1,455 to 2,186.

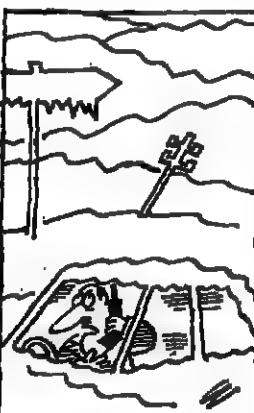
However, that would have involved demolishing the adjoining former South Kensington Squash Club, says the *London Weekly Times*. MGM Cinemas, it adds, is consulting lawyers about a possible appeal to the High Court.

## Getting together

IT'S THAT time of the year for giving, receiving... and getting engaged. Against a background of City revelry yesterday, the vivacious Glenda Boswell and man-about-town Trevor Bass told me of their engagement - of their respective firms, Boswell Partnership and City Financial PR. The new name will be Boswell-City Financial Partnership.

## Out with a bang?

KPMG assures me that its FT advert just three days before Christmas was no joke. It recorded that the joint administrative receivers were offering for sale College Crackers, a Christmas cracker maker, and, together or separately, its division making retail display decorations known as Robledex.



"Hello BP - I'd like some warm Sahara gas please"

## Lit up again

ERNE THOMPSON is again enjoying the full glory of his huge office in Forbes House, the opulent London HQ of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. And if you hear him singing *When the lights go on again*, all over the world... here's why.

The society's chief executive watched with alarm as bulbs popped one by one in the spectacular crystal chandelier over his desk and the gloom became so deep he had to send for maintenance staff.

Unfortunately, so many of the 50 or so bulbs had gone, it took staff nearly two days to replace them.

Thompson says: "I had no idea just how big that chandelier was. They were up there for so long, I thought I would be sitting in the dark for the rest of my time at the SMMT."

And, finally, City Diary's call for readers to name a perfume for British Airways has brought two suggestions from the Far East. One says: "It should be Volée (flight), and should NOT smell of those horrible hot towels." The other says: "Having on several occasions endured the noxious aroma of the aircraft on landing at Hong Kong, I think the most appropriate name should be Hong Kong."

COLIN CAMPBELL

## ECONOMIC VIEW

JANET BUSH

# Nowhere to run as nations succumb to poverty trap

Britain had the sharpest rises in poverty and income inequality in the 1980s

There is something wonderfully provocative about parliamentary committees that makes even the most hardened politicians and businessmen shoot their mouths off and live to regret it. We may all have become thoroughly jaded about the cradle of our democracy but these committees have a knack of showing people in their true colours.

Remember the famous appearance by Iain Vallance, chairman of British Telecom, who said he envied the working hours of a junior hospital doctor; or Bank of England Governor Eddie George's loss of public cool when he accused the Treasury Select Committee of baying for the blood of his staff after the collapse of Barings?

Even Kenneth Clarke, the nice bloke who believes in public services and little Midlands engineering firms, had an outbreak of apoplexy before Christmas. Asked by the Treasury committee about the effect of his Budget on the poorest 10 per cent measured by income (the tenth decile as it is known), he said this group drove him up the wall. Many of them, he asserted, had very good accountants.

Underlying the Chancellor's unfortunate remark is a society-wide embarrassment about growing inequality and the apparent permanence of poverty even in the richest societies. It is not just Conservatives who are guilty of parading their ineffectuality in the face of society's economic extremes. Jack Straw, Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, misinterpreted his own party's drive for the middle ground by launching an attack on beggars, winos and squeegee merchants, an outbreak that helped, along with female quotas, to lose him his place on the National Executive Committee.

Some experts go to enormous lengths to dismiss poverty as an issue. Richard Fryke, in a pamphlet for the Institute of Economic Affairs, argued that official poverty statistics are grossly misleading, one of his arguments being that leisure time is not properly valued.

He disputes the common view that losing one's job makes one more unhappy. An official survey of unemployed showed that 34 per cent of those who lost their jobs were unhappier, compared with 13 per cent who were happier.

Among those who then found jobs, 44 per cent were happier and only 12 per cent became less happy.

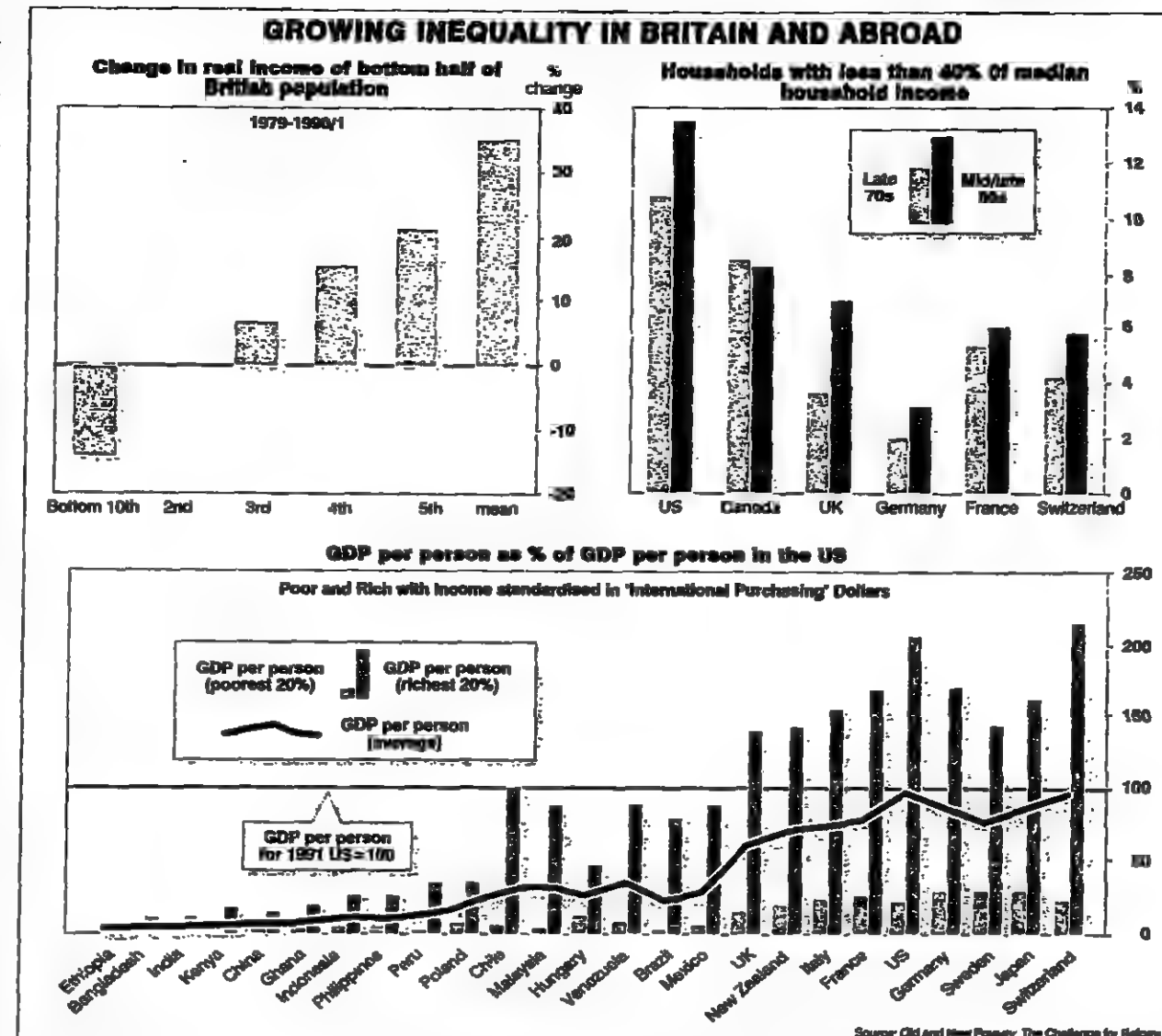
Not satisfied with the glaring obviousness of this, Mr Fryke invites us to look at it in a different way. Two-thirds of those who became unemployed did not become less happy and 56 per cent of those

who then got jobs did not become any happier. This, he concludes, means that a majority of the unemployed place a significant value on their leisure. Is it not possible that people did not become happier when they got a job because they were badly paid and remained just as worried about being laid off again?

Britain and other rich societies just do not know how to deal with mass unemployment and entrenched poverty. Indeed, solutions seem further off than ever as governments try to limit social spending and rely on greater labour market flexibility.

Leading economists in Germany say that the country could do with a good dose of Thatcherism to expose industry to the discipline of the market and erode the generous benefits afforded by the social security system. France's prosperity of social and industrial protections is under the severest pressure because of the drive to meet the Maastricht criteria.

It is worrying that continental economies want to emulate the Anglo-Saxon free market economic model for it is America and Britain that have seen the greatest increase in income inequality and poverty.



of the average disposable income in each country. According to this definition, almost one in five of non-elderly households in the United States fell below the 50 per cent poverty line by the second half of the 1980s under Reaganite free market policies.

In studies both by the European Commission and the Washington-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Britain has the distinction of having experienced the sharpest increases in poverty and income inequality in the 1980s. Between 1979 and 1990-91, the average real income of the bottom tenth of households (after housing costs) fell 14 per cent, a figure surely not achieved by any

temporarily on hard times, somehow slipping through the social safety net, and the almost permanent kind of poverty which has resulted from mass unemployment and been exacerbated as the frontiers of the State have been rolled back. This new poverty is passed like a fatal gene from one generation to the next, the children of unemployed parents being far more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty themselves.

In the past, poverty used to hit older people particularly hard but that has improved a great deal. In Britain, the number of old people living on social security fell 25 per cent between 1974 and 1991. But, over the same time, the number of children under 16 dependent on benefits has quadrupled.

There is, even in a successful economy such as Germany, a brutal kind of centrifugal force, flinging people to the extremes of affluence and poverty. Over the past 20 years, economic growth has risen by more than 70 per cent in real terms in Germany but the number of poor has more than doubled in the same period. The concept of solidarity has almost disappeared from our vocabulary. Society includes some and excludes others and it is difficult to see how to break this down.

Clearly, a re-examination of the welfare state is not a runner. This would not only be economically unsustainable but ineffective at including the excluded.

The Conservatives have, along with the other parties, been groping slowly towards other structural ways in which economic exclusion can be eased: a changing balance between benefits and taxation, more subsidised child care, greater provision of training and a drive towards better educational standards.

But it is likely that these measures, even if useful at the margin or in the longer-term, will be rendered meaningless if Britain continues to pursue the tactic of frightening the workforce into accepting low wages and our European neighbours are tempted to emulate the approach.

Therein lies insecurity on a scale that destroys incentives and has ensured that the "feel-good" factor is missing from the current British recovery. As Chris Pond, of the Low Pay Unit, puts it: "Uncertainty is the enemy of flexibility. Without protection of their employment and living standards, people are less willing to take risks and accept change."

Mr Pond quotes two great Conservatives on the subject. In 1909, Winston Churchill said that "decent conditions make for industrial efficiency and increase rather than decrease competitive power". In 1946, Harold Macmillan welcomed the fair wages provision as "the protector, certainly of the standard of living of the workers, but also of the standards of competence and honour of industry as a whole".

Messrs Clarke and Straw would do well to forbid themselves the indulgence of prejudice and panic in an admittedly difficult economic climate the world over and remember such common sense from an earlier time.

BT may not have acted with sound political wisdom at home in 1995, but in my experience abroad none of its competitors from other countries has to face competition from their own Regulators seeking to determine their world-wide marketing potential.

BT's customers, employees and shareholders must not be subjected to such stupidity. Over to the Secretary of State and Parliament!

Yours faithfully,  
KENNETH WARREN,  
Woodfield House,  
Goudhurst,  
Cranbrook, Kent.

## 6 New poverty is passed like a fatal gene from one generation to the next

ants alone, whereas the richest tenth saw a 50 per cent increase. Overall, average household incomes rose a real 36 per cent.

The disease is spreading. The Commission found that in the 12 countries of the European Union, the number of people in poverty increased slightly between 1975 and 1980 from about 38.6 million to 39.5 million. It then jumped to about 43.9 million by 1985 and a recent, rougher estimate (which includes the former East Germany) suggests that, by the early 1990s, the number has jumped again to some 50 million.

One of *Old and New Poverty*'s editors, Klaus Finken, differentiates between the kind of poverty in which people fell

in December 1993 that competition would be introduced into the whole of the domestic market by 1998, well ahead of the MMC's recommended date and 13 years before 2011.

Gas contract renegotiation has happened in the US, Canada and Western Australia. Likewise, renegotiation is inevitable in the UK.

Yours faithfully,  
PETER SANGUINETTI  
(Director of corporate affairs),  
British Gas,  
152 Grosvenor Road, SW1.

Surely, the civil servants in the Department of Trade and Industry did not give Mr Cruickshank to understand this was to be his remit so that, indirectly, they could still meddle, post-privatisation?

To aid his cause, Mr Cruickshank has rallied three Acts of Parliament. To one of these I commend his careful attention, the Act which set up his office, in which he will find that his principal duty is to act as a catalyst to look after the public as customers. Regulators are not "responsible to no one", as one of his fellow

immediately following the share capital consolidation should be as close as practicable to the value each existing Southern Electric share would have had prior to the payment of the special dividend (in each case after excluding the value of the NGG distribution), and the proportion of the issued share capital of the company held by each shareholder following the share capital consolidation

## No evidence of British Gas chief misleading committee

From Mr Peter Sanguinetti  
Sir, Mr Falconer (Business Letters, December 22) is entitled to his opinion on British Gas. But he cannot be permitted to justify it on the basis of errors of fact.

British Gas's chief executive did not mislead the select committee. Each question raised by the committee was answered fully and frankly in writing and verbally before and during both hearings. Mr Falconer should read the committee's report. He will find no

evidence of the committee being misled. On British Gas long-term contracts, the following facts may assist him.

□ Fifty-five per cent of these contracts were signed before 1986 with a statutory monopoly and a legal obligation to supply the market up to 25,000 tonnes, specified in the Offer for Sale prospectus as lasting for 25 years, that is to 2011.

□ Ninety-seven per cent were signed before the President of the Board of Trade announced

From Mr Geoffrey N. Denice  
Sir, I have a small holding of shares in Southern Electric, and I have received a 40-page document informing me of a dividend, a special dividend, an allocation of National Grid shares, and the consolidation of Southern Electric's share capital.

It contains this gem: "The basis of calculation of the share capital consolidation is that the expected market value of each new Southern Electric share

should be, as far as practicable, remain the same. Other than in respect of its nominal value, which will change from 50p to 53p... a new electric share will carry the same rights as an existing Southern Electric share."

Such should not be allowed to blush unseen.  
Yours faithfully,  
GEOFFREY N. DENICE,  
The Firs, East Grinstead,  
Salisbury, Wiltshire.

## Telecoms regulator's crossed lines

From Sir Kenneth Warren  
Sir, The grand title of the telecommunications regulator, Mr Donald Cruickshank, is "The Director-General of Telecommunications". From his recent edicts, he appears to believe that therefore his job is to run the telecom services in the United Kingdom. Why else could he believe that he can require British Telecom to warn its competitors, in good time, so that they can counter new services BT wants to launch (December 22)?

Surely, the civil servants in the Department of Trade and Industry did not give Mr Cruickshank to understand this was to be his remit so that, indirectly, they could still meddle, post-privatisation?

To aid his cause, Mr Cruickshank has rallied three Acts of Parliament. To one of these I commend his careful attention, the Act which set up his office, in which he will find that his principal duty is to act as a catalyst to look after the public as customers. Regulators are not "responsible to no one", as one of his fellow

regulators stated recently. All are responsible to defined Secretaries of State, who are, in turn, responsible to Parliament.

Thus to push his plans before the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would be an unwarranted nonsense as the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry would be forced to be judge of both the result of the inquiry and the actions of his appointee.

BT may not have acted with sound political wisdom at home in 1995, but in my experience abroad none of its competitors from other countries has to face competition from their own Regulators seeking to determine their world-wide marketing potential.

BT's customers, employees and shareholders must not be subjected to such stupidity. Over to the Secretary of State and Parliament!

Yours faithfully,  
KENNETH WARREN,  
Woodfield House,  
Goudhurst,  
Cranbrook, Kent.

# US holds key to NatWest's global plans

Richard Thomson finds that time is of the essence for an ambitious bank

With the sale of NatWest Bancorp last week, National Westminster Bank has finally pulled out of retail banking in America. It will also have more than \$3 billion burning a hole in its pocket and it seems certain that a chunk of that will be ploughed back into the US.

For although NatWest has left the high streets, its ambitions in America remain immense. Its aim is to build NatWest Markets, its securities and money markets operation, into a "bulge bracket" investment bank competing with the likes of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley. This is the key part of a global strategy to make NWM into a leading world investment bank. The success of this global ambition depends crucially on success in the US.

"We want to be prime service providers to international investors because the world is moving into an era of a few globally dominant securities houses," explains Peter Hall, the head of NWM in America, who is

tion expected to produce "good money" this year. NWM has a thriving derivatives and swaps business as well as a strong foreign exchange and treasury operation, and it is the market leader in the US in financing real estate trusts. Its weakness is fixed-interest bonds.

A month ago NatWest bought a small US corporate finance boutique, Gleacher & Co, for \$135 million to beef up its corporate advisory business. "To optimise the profits from our equities business, we need more of primary business flow, such as new and secondary share issues," says Mr Hall. "Before Gleacher, we didn't have an effective executive capability. Now we're seeing a significant new deal flow." The purchase of another smallish corporate finance operation remains likely, although NWM may build its corporate finance team by cherry-picking individuals from other firms.

Another key area that NatWest is likely to target is investment management. Growing organically in this responsible field, particularly for a foreign institution, would be considerably more difficult than buying a US fund management bank. There's no point being in the second tier because you have much the same cost structure but nowhere near the same revenue flows. With this aim in view, the US is strategically the most important part of NWM's growth. What we do in the US, more than either the UK or Asia, will determine whether we become a top-tier investment bank.

There is no point being in global banking's second tier

NWM's prospects for growth in America are better than for most other British and European banks. With a staff of 1,100 active in securities, corporate finance and derivatives, the jewel in its crown is the equities business which was built up around a core of people taken from Drexel Burnham Lambert when that firm crashed a few years ago. It is now the largest foreign-owned equity broker on Wall Street, and the thirteenth largest in the New York stock market.

"This is the most difficult and expensive part to get right," says Mr Hall. But he thinks they have finally done so, with the equities opera-

firm. Moreover, NWM is likely to move fast. The move towards consolidation into a few global investment banks is gathering pace. "In the game being played out in the international capital markets, time is of the essence," Mr Hall says. "Anyone who doesn't follow through their strategy with determination risks being marginalised."

To some observers in America that is already happening to BZW, once the strongest of the big UK banks in America. And since its virtual collapse and takeover by Swiss Bank Corporation this year, SBC Warburg's strong showing on Wall Street appears to have faded.

This leaves NWM as the emerging British front-runner. NatWest's strategy, however, is fraught with dangers. To become a leading investment bank will be a complex and expensive process. NWM is probably correct in thinking that the investment banking universe is shrinking to a few globally powerful firms. Time will tell if it succeeds in becoming one of them.

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**FILM 1**

A child and a lost banknote are the main items in a heart-warming Iranian movie, *The White Balloon*

**FILM 2**

... while the life and awakening love of a pizza chef provide the material for the intriguing *Heavy*

**THE FILM ARTS**

**FILM 3**

Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom* is one of Geoff Brown's movies of the year

**FILM 4**

On this day, 100 years ago, the Lumière brothers opened the world's first paying cinema

**RADIO**

**Only one box had vision**

TALK about a season of comfort and joy. The phrase might have been composed for radio types at Christmas, a time when we are prone to a superior sniff through the television listings in search of reasons to cry bah, humbug! Phrases such as "a feature-length episode of..." and "a special Christmas edition of..." litter the listings like pine needles, proving that television is a wasteland of unoriginal programming.

Whereas radio... radio on Christmas Day, to take a first instance, behaves as if intelligent life were still functioning. Radio 4 even has bulletins read by proper newscasters. All right, I don't know what happened to the news editors. On Christmas morning the news was led by the Royal Family gathering without Princess Di, followed by half of Scotland being buried under snow. Southeastern bias? You said it.

But then came real programmes. *Lashings of Ginger Beer* at 10am was a gem in which children sampled the fare in children's books. After that, the Beeb even had the nerve to start a new series, *Walters' Festive Frolics*, in which John Walters took all the standard requirements of Christmas to Majorca only to find that Majorca had them on sale already.

And so on and so forth. The evening highlights were a terrific production of *Private Lives* starring Imogen Stubbs and a surreal 15 minutes of Spike Milligan poetry in *Spike's Fleas, Knees and Hidden Elephants*.

The point about these programmes is that they are not for the most part, predictable. The point about their television equivalents is that they are. I know that in television the stakes are higher, that risk-taking could amount to job-risking. And, yes, I know that BBC2 and Channel 4, the so-called minority channels, do go for originality. But who decided that sit-com, film, sitcom, film, film was the only scheduling rhythm we would dance to?

What radio proves every Christmas is that television would do us all, and itself, a favour if it took a few chances.

PETER BARNARD

Geoff Brown on new films and the pick of '95. Plus the Lumières' big day, a century ago

**Mesmerised by simple sights**

One hundred years ago to the day, cinema started its life as a regular spectacle for paying customers (see *David Robinson*, below). In the intervening century it has grown into the world's most pervasive medium for art and entertainment. It can inspire and embody dreams like no other. It can also flatten people's sensibilities and make the globe look like Hollywood's backyard.

Technology has taken cinema far beyond the boundaries faced by the early pioneers. But once in a while, a film comes along so simple and direct in its appeal that you feel something of the amazement that must have struck the Lumière brothers' first patrons. A film, in fact, like Jafar Panahi's *The White Balloon*.

This small but mesmerising work hails from Iran, although it should appeal to people from any country where children are children and banknotes can disappear between the slats of a pavement grating. Seven-year-old Razieh badgers her mother into giving her money to buy a plump, pretty goldfish with dancing fins for the new year celebrations on the first day of spring. A few steps outside her home, she almost loses the money to snake-charmers. The note then drops on to the pavement, to be blown down the grating by a motorbike's exhaust. With the help of rods, chewing gum and passing adults, can Razieh retrieve her money before the pet shop shuts for the long new year holiday?



The sands of time are slipping away fast as little Razieh (Aida Mohammadkhani) struggles to retrieve her lost banknote in *The White Balloon*

Panahi's prizewinning first film unfolds in real time, so we soon come to share the girl's struggles and fears, touching-ly played out on Aida Mohammadkhani's sulky face. A protégé of Abbas Kiarostami, one of cinema's most humane directors (and the deviser of the film's script), Panahi already displays the master's knack of handling amateur actors and distilling the poetic essence from daily life.

The camera adeptly follows the girl and her banknote through Tehran's shady alleyways and bustling streets; but it excels even more at standing still, patiently watching the drama unfold, just like Lumière's cinematographe. In one particularly delicious scene, a lonely soldier on leave joins Razieh in her vigil by the grating. He sits, starts talking and offers a sweet. She looks wary, primly spreads out her skirt and fiddles with her fingers, anxious for help but mindful of warnings about meeting strangers.

**The White Balloon**  
Renoir, U. 85 mins  
Simple and touching gem from Iran

**Heavy**  
MGM Haymarket, 15, 104 mins  
Slow but absorbing American indie

Moral questions keep poking through the girl's adventures. She should not have stopped at the snake-charmers, a kindly woman says. Razieh knows, but "I wanted to see what was not good for me". When the same woman says she will mollify Razieh's mother by explaining that it was not her fault the banknote was lost, Razieh asks plaintively: "Whose fault is it?"

But Panahi and Kiarostami's human understanding prevents them blaming anybody. All - harassed shopkeepers, a young Afghan balloon seller, Razieh's father snapping orders off-screen - are embraced for what they are: faults, virtues, the whole bundle. Finding a film with such a generous heart and simple beauty, we can face our own new year torments.

Heavy is another antidote to most new releases. This is an American independent film, a first feature by James Mangold. But there is no passion, no flashing of guns and hardboiled dialogue, no itch to be the new Tarantino. The pace is slow, at times almost painfully so. And Pruitt Taylor Vince's central character, Victor, pizza chef at Pete and Dolly's Restaurant, a truckstop dump in upstate New York, lacks all glamour. He is fat and imprisoned by

intense shyness: instead of talking, he nervously observes the world through hurt, roving eyes. To add to his handicaps, his domineering mother Dolly - Pete is long gone - is played by Shelley Winters.

As it happens, Winters is not quite the drawback that observers of her later career might expect. Mangold has tamed the appetite for chewing scenery. This is a low-key film, and Winters's querulous bleatings slot into place in a chamber symphony of conflicting voices. There is Callie, the aimless college dropout played by 17-year-old Liv Tyler (a name to watch), who gets work at Pete and Dolly's and stirs Victor's dormant passions. There is Delores, the world-weary waitress: a good role for the tarnished beauty of former pop icon, Deborah Harry. Aside from Victor, two other men hang around the women: a bar fly and a garage mechanic. Uninterested in complicated plot mechanics, Mangold simply lets these forlorn people rub against each other and watches the ripples spread when the un-

easy calm of Victor's life is disturbed.

Mangold came to his feature debut after a frustrating brush with Hollywood. A student film secured him a one-year stint at Disney, where he was removed from directing a television film and helped to turn *Oliver Twist* into a meandering, forgotten canine cartoon, *Oliver and Company*. Fingers burnt, he retreated to film school and developed *Heavy* under Milos Forman's guidance at Columbia University in New York.

Like Forman's early Czech films, *Heavy* empathises with its vulnerable characters. But Mangold ploughs his own furrow. It is a narrow one at the moment, and he is taking risks by asking modern audiences to accept a drama without obvious thrills: often, indeed, without dialogue. But patience brings its rewards, and anyone not immobilised by Christmas pud should find refreshment in the film's calmness and sensitivity.

If *Heavy* sounds too gloomy for the festive season, you can always amuse yourself by trying to construct a 1995 Top Ten film list. The year may have been short on outstanding achievements, but a sizeable number of stimulating films still passed by. Few came from mainstream Hollywood, although *Little Women* worked wonders with Louisa May Alcott, and *Nobody's Fool*, Robert Benton's slice of small-town Americana, deserved far wider exposure.

Otherwise, this was the year of the mavericks. Tim Burton

made *Ed Wood*, a moving and uproarious tribute to the man crowned the world's worst film director, Edward D. Wood Jr. Bryan Singer leapt to prominence with *The Usual Suspects*, a fiendishly scripted crime thriller. Gus Van Sant bounced back with *To Die For*. Tom DiCillo returned with *Living in Oblivion*. And in *Hoop Dreams*, Steve James, Fred Marx and Peter Gilbert produced a documentary film with the breadth and detail of that elusive beast, the Great American Novel.

Luckily there is more to life than Schwarzenegger's muscles or Kevin Costner's ego, although increasingly you need to live close to London to discover this. The best foreign films not showing at your local Odeon included Zhou Xiaowen's *Ermo*, Wong Kar-wai's *Chungking Express* and Ali Kaurismäki's *Take Care of Your Scarf, Tajana*. Intense pleasures have also come from Tunisia (*The Silences of the Palace*), Iceland (*Cold Fever*) and Italy (Michael Radford's *Il Postino*). From the Antipodes came two contrasting delights: *Babe* and Peter Jackson's impressively mature *Heavenly Creatures*.

The saddest aspect of the year's moviegoing has been the vacuum at the centre. We desperately need good popular films that entertain without playing down to audiences, that move beyond bloated special effects and pop-video frenzy, films that believe in people and stories and life itself. Too often film-makers and audiences sell themselves

**CONCERT**

**Viols in winter**

Fretwork  
St John's

THE title of Fretwork's "Wild Winter" programme was taken from the main item in the programme, the first London performance of the Musgrave's *Wild Winter*. Fretwork has actively sought works by living composers who have found inspiration in the sound world of the viol consort.

Musgrave's work is based on a mosaic of text, from wide-ranging sources and in different languages. The title and main theme are drawn from Wilfred Owen's 1914 extracts from which form the prologue, reprise and coda to the piece, interspersed with a series of lamentations on the savagery and destruction of war.

A vocal quartet (Lisa Tyrell, Paul Agnew, Andrew Murgatroyd and Colin Campbell) are supported and complemented by the viols in discordant accompaniments and dramatic interjections that boast wild harmonies.

While the Musgrave is an extended, at times impenetrable, piece, Sally Beamish's *In Dreaming*, a setting of Callan's speech from Act III of *The Tempest*, is an atmospheric but detailed miniature. Tenor Paul Agnew and Fretwork gave a superb account of a brilliantly conceived work that builds on musical allusions to Tippett and Purcell.

This was all the Purcell we were allowed, however. All year Fretwork has championed the music of William Lawes, one of Purcell's immediate predecessors. Both the *Consort Set* a 5 in G minor and his poignant tribute to his friend and colleague John Tomkins, *Musick, the Master of the Art is dead*, are masterpieces, the consort revealing an imagination that called for light playing from Fretwork, the lament full of searing but controlled dissonances. Consort music by Gibbons and Jenkins completed a rewarding programme.

TESS KNIGHTON

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**The reel anniversary, probably**

In a Paris cellar on December 28, 1895, cinema was born. Or was it?

By common consent rather than historical justification, today marks the official centenary of the motion picture. On December 28 1895 the Lumière cinematographe went on show to a paying public in a basement below the Grand Café in the Boulevard des Capucines, Paris.

The 30 or so people who bought tickets and joined the invited guests descended a narrow staircase and pushed their way through velvet curtains to the Salon Indien, a small room with a hundred café chairs placed in rows in front of a white screen. Behind them, the cinematographe, a neat little machine which could serve as camera and projector, was mounted on a wooden trestle and screened by curtains, as much to drown its sewing-machine racket as to conceal its technical secrets.

The show lasted less than 20 minutes with ten one-shot films. The audience was thrilled to see photographs in movement: workers leaving the Lumière factory, traffic in the streets, waves splashing

against a pier. Within a week, police were needed to control the queues. Soon, more than 2,000 people a day were paying one franc to see the cinematographe. The only loser was the landlord of the Salon Indien, who had cautiously insisted on a rental of Fr30 a day rather than the 20 per cent of the receipts the Lumières proposed.

Remarkably, neither Louis Lumière, the inventor of the cinematographe, nor Auguste, his brother and collaborator, was in Paris for this historic premiere. The shows were entirely the idea of their father, Antoine. Louis wrote to the engineer who made the machine: "My father tormented us with wanting to give shows in Paris, but we have decided to keep out of it."

The serious-minded Louis and Auguste saw their cinematographe as an interesting scientific advance. Antoine, bon viveur and friend of

music-hall artists, must take credit for being the first to see the entertainment potential of movies.

The Lumières, however, were not the first to make moving photographs: the Edison Kinetoscope had achieved that in 1893, though the pictures were seen by individual viewers in a peepshow device, not projected onto a screen. Throughout 1895 many other inventors in America and Europe were experimenting with machines to project the Kinetoscope images. The cinematographe itself was patented ten months before the December 28 show, during which time the Lumières had already given demonstrations for photographic and other societies.

Nor, as is often claimed, was the Lumières' December show the first before a paying audience. In May 1895 there were public film projections on Broadway, New York; and on

November 1 the Skladanowsky Brothers showed their Bioscop projector at the Wintergarten, Berlin. The results may have been less satisfactory than the cinematographe; but the public came, paid and marvelled.

So why do we celebrate the Lumières and December 28? Perhaps because the French are better at commemorating national glories. Already in 1925 and 1935 they enthusiastically celebrated the 30th and 40th anniversaries of the cinematographe. The Government formally dissociated itself from the 50th, however, since the Lumière brothers had disgraced themselves during the war that had then just ended: Louis was decorated by the Vichy government, while Auguste was a member of the notorious collaborationist Legion Volontaire Française.

These indiscretions led to the abandonment of their portrait on a French banknote this year. Just the same, the world continues to commemorate Antoine's lucky show.

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## Andrei Navrozov urges caution as KGB archives reveal the full extent of Stalin's manipulation of the intelligentsia

By any criterion this book is an event in the historiography of world culture. The value of the extensive research, which it abstracts, into the literary biographies of Russia's martyred writers is quite absolute and impossible to misinterpret. Yet like the unprecedented research itself, the publication of these literary discoveries is a political event as well, and one whose significance in today's world is far more ambivalent.

Circumspect and selective as the opening of KGB archives to scholars has been, in the West it has been greeted with a fundamentalist enthusiasm that is often based on sheer semantics: the opening of a Lubyanka file is akin to the opening of a Moscow McDonald's. For the native sceptic who wishes to caution the West not to fall for spurious unanalysing, the abiding difficulty is that just as fast food is indeed

# The strange death of literary Russia

fast, so each newly opened file is indisputably an eye-opener.

For the generations of Russians brought up on clandestine readings of forbidden or neglected writers, everything miraculously preserved in the time capsule to which the author's "Commission for the Literary Legacy of Writer-Victims of the Repressions" were given access in 1988 is a revelation, be it a lost variant of a Mandelstam poem or the last photograph of Nikolai Klyuev. But the time capsule has yielded more than mementoes and epiphanies. Entire works, such as Klyuev's epic *Song of the Great Mother* and Andrei Platonov's *Technical Novel*, have now been exhumed and published.

Of still more universal interest is the historical aspect of the commission's haul. Most scholars, both Russian and in the West, have continued to treat the Stalin era in ways made acceptable by Khrushchev during the political spring which he brought about as the requisite climate for his struggle for power. It is only now, for instance, as John Crowfoot concides in a note to this book, that "Khrushchev's personal approval in 1962 for the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*" can be seen for what it was, "a striking instance of the manipulation of literature for political purposes". As Khrushchev's reputation as a disinterested re-

THE KGB'S LITERARY ARCHIVE  
The Discovery of the Ultimate Fate of Russia's Suppressed Writers  
By Vitaly Shentalinsky  
Harvill, £18

former undergoes revision, so the precepts of historical analysis he foisted on historians with respect to Stalin begin to crumble.

The consensus has been that Stalin was a bloodthirsty maniac who played hit-and-miss with his foreign policy as irrationally as he gambled with the lives of millions

at home. Yet so long as the pursuit of earthly power is acknowledged as a rational aim, Stalin's 30-year quest for global power must mark him as one of the truly innovative empire-builders of all time. That this modern Caesar nearly drowned Russia and half the world in blood during those years should not blind historians to the utterly rational and supremely shrewd stratagems he employed in the prosecution of his personal goal.

This volume offers fresh reminders of Stalin's skill at outfoxing intellectuals. When Maxim Gorky, whom Stalin used as the engine for the Union of Soviet Writers propaganda machine, had to be drawn to Moscow from his Sorrento villa, a

special home for delinquent children was set up in Russia to correspond with him. "For each of my letters I receive 22 from them," marvelled the touched writer. A few years later the secret police, out of "concern for the old man's peace of mind", would print single copies of national newspapers for him.

As the episode of Stalin's 1932 *postanovleniye o perestroike* (Decree on Restructuring) illustrates, he played the intelligentsia like a fiddle. Oppressed during the preceding 15 years of Bolshevik rule, the intellectuals, he had calculated, would run to him for protection. The KGB archives show that only a few, notably Mandelstam, demurred. The rest, from Pasternak to

Prokofiev, seized the "new freedom" they thought was on offer. The stage was set for the 1935 Paris "anti-fascist congress of writers", whereupon "all progressive mankind" allied itself with Moscow.

It remains to be seen whether Gorbachev's *perestroika* and the subsequent "fall of Communism" — with which the careful "new openness" of the KGB elite is politically linked — owe more to the spirit of Stalinist deceptions than today's intellectuals would care to concede. Do historians understand Gorbachev's motives any better than they did Khrushchev's? What new empires are contemplated by Russia's future rulers with the help of their conscience-stricken, yet ever burgeoning, secret police?

Andrei Navrozov has just completed a biography of Boris Pasternak.

## Tales told by an idiot of genius

Dostoevsky's life changed when in 1849, beginning *Crime and Punishment* but still virtually unknown, he proposed to his stenographer Anna Snitkina. At 20, she took on one of the world's most difficult men. I am vile, Anna, he would say, prostrating his 44-year-old body at her feet. He neglected her and she stumbled. Almost immediately they fled Russia for Wiesbaden to escape his creditors. The intended brief stay turned into six years of peripatetic isolation and homesickness in Germany and Switzerland. The miracle of these stretched years is that, between bouts of epilepsy, and despite the death of their first child, he went on writing. By day he read the Russian press in cafés. By night, he finished *Crime and Punishment*, wrote *The Idiot* and began *The Devils*. In between came two great novels: *The Gambler* and *The Eternal Husband*.

The Dostoevskys, desperate to return home, finally did so in 1857 to spiralling fame. In 1873 he began writing a column in a journal, *The Citizen*, and three years later began a one-man monthly review, *A Writer's Diary*, which exerted an immense influence on public opinion until his death in 1881. The

*Diary* was halted for two years while he wrote his final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and the two works share many themes.

The novels are more accurately compendiums of flash-lit dramatic scenes; their single obsession authenticity. Human actions shadow and echo one another. Characters spout the same sentiments with vastly different moral incentives. Some seem to know truth by divination, others follow the bandwagon of intellectual fashion. The quest for authenticity — and perhaps its essential impossibility — leads to absorbing "double" constructions and devious polyphonies. It proceeds in one man's heart in *Crime and Punishment*, becomes a social problem in *The Idiot* and a political one in *The Devils*. The two characteristic factors, poverty and a study of the law, which encourage Raskolnikov to juggle free will and moral responsibility at the expense of an old woman's life, hang over an oeuvre obsessed with crime, and ultimately the crime of murder.

The first complete English edition of *A Writer's Diary* has now been translated by Kenneth Lantz. Its editor, Gary Saul Morson, emphasises that Dostoevsky was both the chronicler of abysmal



Group portrait of writers (1920), from *The Salon Album of Vera Sudeikin-Stravinsky* (Princeton, £50), a palimpsest of St Petersburg. The artist, Sergei Gorodetsky, sits in front. Left to right: Valeri Briusov, Fedor Sologub, Alexei Remizov, Viacheslav Ivanov, Alexander Blok, Mikhail Kuzmin, Andrei Bely, Konstantin Balmont

spiritual travails and a character suffering them. His novels show the disastrous consequences of putting an absolute theory into practice and believing in one thing or nothing. *A Writer's Diary*, though it was a useful vehicle for fiction and comment, found its true popular character when Dostoevsky sounded off as a national prophet, decrying foreigners and Jews. He hailed Russia, embroiled in Balkan wars, as successor to Imperial Rome and Byzantium.

For many years *A Writer's Diary* has been an embarrassment to Dostoevsky studies. Frank reminds us of a famous quarrel Dostoevsky

had some years earlier in Baden-Baden with Turgenev over whether fanaticism was a necessary characteristic of a Russian writer. Turgenev was pilloried in *The Devils* for his "18th-century" moderation.

So the aesthetic and moral and national strands of Dostoevsky's difficult oeuvre weave together. There is a desperate casting about for non-utilitarian values which would be at once Christian and Russian and respect the unpredictability of human nature and the accidental quality of material events. It becomes impossible to judge crime. In the *Diary* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky

richochets between praising individual responsibility and dismissing the guilt of premeditated crime: for how can a man know when he picks up a potential weapon that his aim is to commit murder?

This is what post-modern Christianity will look like, surely. Dostoevsky is an alarming prophet of Western chaos: to me, his world view spells deep moral trouble, which his art does not enlighten. I disagree with Frank that its power is universal and undiminished. But I accept Frank's view that Dostoevsky's craving for Christian

love proceeded from the deep disturbance of the mock execution he faced as a young man, and his subsequent hard labour in Siberia. Prince Myshkin, the "Idiot", observed that a condemned man lost even the dignity of struggling for life. Dostoevsky's sense of dignity was probably never restored.

In its place came furious assertions of "free will". The desperate desire to gamble in casino and cosmos also had an erotic tinge. Frank thinks Dostoevsky may have been impotent with Apollinaria Suslova, the mistress before Snitkina who inspired the fiery Nastasya Filippovna in *The Idiot*.

You have to read Dostoevsky, alas. Nietzsche and Freud, Conrad and Virginia Woolf all did. He is the genius who has done most to illumine 19th-century Russian psychology and to make the terrifying problems of atheism and nihilism part of the modernism we still grapple with. Frank's magisterial five-volume study of his life and work, of which this is the fourth, salutes the grandeur of Dostoevsky's project, his devastating exposure of the intellectual debate tugging at the roots of Judeo-Christian morality, and his imaginative power of elevating social realism to a tragic plane.

NEW YEAR WEEKEND BOOKS: Helen Dunmore on Peter Hoeg Plus: 1995's bestsellers — who did well and why?

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## Scavengers for the sublime

We are so used to the idea of Old Master paintings as a prime commodity, enshrined in public galleries or fought over in the saleroom, that it comes as a surprise to learn that this high status and the activity itself of collecting old paintings dates back not much further than the beginning of the 17th century.

Before that era, the collecting of old art objects and the prestige it conferred on the owner was largely confined to Greek and Roman sculpture, coins and medals. Vast accumulations of old paintings built up over generations in churches, monasteries and palaces, particularly in Italy. But these had been ordered new, directly from the artist, and it is this that distinguishes patronage as an activity from collecting.

The idea that one individual could in the space of a few years form by purchase a collection of hundreds of choice paintings by the most famous artists and display them in a gallery context seems to have been pioneered in England by Charles I and a handful of intimates known as the Whitehall Group. They had opportunities to buy quality in bulk that had never existed before, mainly because of the political and economic decline of the Italian states. Buying the best pictures on this scale was chiefly for princes and great noblemen.

Yet for much of the century prices were lower than for many other luxury items. It is an eye-opener to learn from this book, which is based on Jonathan Brown's Mellon lectures at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, that Charles I's sister, Princess Elizabeth, owned a court dress, the gold and silver lace on which was worth more than any but the most expensive canvases by Raphael or Titian in his collection.

As Prince of Wales, Charles had before him the example of Lord Arundel, who collected Italian paintings with the

same care and discernment that he brought to buying Classical sculpture. But Professor Brown suggests that Charles was more influenced by the fast-moving acquisitiveness and flashy taste of his father's young favourite, the Duke of Buckingham. In the half-dozen years before his murder in 1628, Buckingham filled his London house with more than 400 paintings, including Titian's great *Ecce Homo*. Among those that got away from this insatiably acquisitive man was the *Mona Lisa*, which Louis XIII refused him as a memento of a trip to Paris.

The upwardly mobile Buckingham bought Old Masters

Marc Jordan

KINGS AND CONNOISSEURS  
Collecting Art in 17th-century Europe  
By Jonathan Brown  
Yale, £35

to flaunt his new wealth and social status. For Charles, collecting was an integral part of the magnificence that went with 17th-century kingship. It was also a genuine passion: he shone in art politics as he never did in the real thing. He got off to a good start in 1623 when he persuaded Philip IV of Spain to give him Titian's *Pardo Venus* and *Charles V with a Hound*. But, as Brown drolly points out, Philip could spare them, having inherited the largest group of works by Titian ever owned by a single individual.

Charles also bought on an unprecedented scale, most significantly in 1627, when he spent £10,000 on the bulk of the collection of the impoverished Gonzaga Dukes of Mantua, who had been patrons of Mantegna, Raphael, Giulio Romano, Correggio and Titian. He found himself the owner of a hoard that included Titian's *Entombment*, Raphael's *Holy Family* ("La Perla"),

Correggio's *Education of Cupid* and Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*.

The English Civil War brought an end to the legend of Charles I and his circle. Under the Commonwealth the royal collection was put up for sale to pay the Crown's debts, and throughout the 1650s the surviving members of the Whitehall Group or their heirs also sold off their art works in order to live. England's loss brought huge benefits to princely collectors elsewhere in Europe, and Brown's story continues with studies of the courts of Spain, France and Flanders. Not even in the aftermath of the French Revolution was such a quantity of Old Masters released onto the market in such a short space of time: the sale of Charles I's collection alone put 1,570 pictures into circulation.

The chief beneficiary of this diaspora was Philip IV of Spain. With the advice of Velázquez and the discreet operations of his ambassador in London, he creamed off the best of the pictures, thereby contributing to the rapid growth of a collection that was by inheritance and accumulation already the biggest and best in Europe. The other major collector of the later 17th century, Archduke Leopold William of Austria (Governor of the Spanish Netherlands), swallowed up wholesale the best paintings belonging to the heirs of the Dukes of Buckingham and Hamilton, nearly 400 in all, the latter including Giorgione's *Three Philosophers* and Tintoretto's *Susannah and the Elders*. Equally avid, but not quite in the same league, was Cardinal Mazarin of France, though he did buy the *Pardo Venus* and Correggio's *Venus, Cupid and Psyche*.

Alongside the princes and magnates, Brown introduces us to a whole sub-culture of experts and dealers, pawn-brokers, go-betweens, restor-



Anthony Van Dyck's portrait of Charles I hunting (1635) was sold after the Civil War and is now in the Louvre

ers and fakers — the distant ancestors of the modern art trade. Among them are Sir Dudley Carleton, much-put-upon English Ambassador to Venice, forced into the art trade when left with an unpaid-for commission of pictures on his hands after the fall from grace of the Earl of Somerset and Balthasar Gerbier, the dubious ex-painter and self-styled expert who helped to form Buckingham's collection; the ubiquitous Daniel Nys, a Flemish dealer who negotiated the Gonzaga purchase for Charles I, then ruined himself in an attempt to play off the King of England, the Queen of France and the Holy Roman Emperor

against one another; and the fabulously rich Paris banker Everhard Jabach, who sold his collection to Louis XIV and was later accused by a rival of trafficking in fakes.

This is an important book for anyone who is interested in the interaction of art, politics and the marketplace, the appetite of collectors and the ingenuity of dealers, or even just in the curious migrations of masterpieces. And, being American, the author is mercifully free from any sentimental regrets that most of the best of the Whitehall Group's pictures now grace the Prado, the Louvre and Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum, instead of the National Gallery.

## Piebald but still a nation

"We are a nation of parvenus," Lewis Lapham writes of America, "a mixed and piebald company". This is just as true now as it was in the 17th century, when a country that scarcely imagined it might become a nation arose in what was called the New World. Lewis Lapham's analysis of that nation has been entertaining and enlightening his fellow citizens for many years. As editor of the monthly *Harper's Magazine*, he casts a baleful eye across the cultural plain, offering up his often wry and sometimes scathing opinions. His latest collection of essays, *Hotel America: Scenes in the Lobby of the Fin-de-Siècle* (Verso, £19.95), is a disturbing portrait of a nation in fear of its ambiguous future.

WITH the end of the Cold War, Lapham says, America was no longer able to view itself as a star shining out against the dark background of communism. Turning to its own ills — it's the economy, stupid — has given rise to a culture of blame. Lapham points out that the present's idea of the past is a simplification: too true democracy "isn't supposed to be easy".

Lapham's portraits of his country are astute, and his dry wit is as sharp as a knife. He is not unbiased, but he has little time for the certainties of either Left or Right. The subject matter of some of these essays — the details of the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill case, or Whitewater — might at first strike the British reader as obscure. But as portraits of democracy in decline, there is nothing obscure about them. Whatever the qualities of American civilisation, there is no doubting its influence, and Lapham is among its wisest interpreters.

ERICA WAGNER



# Lost rhymes by the parson of Grimes

John Bayley hails a major poet's rediscovered story in verse of a girl's infanticide and feigned madness

The strain of living in an age of reason and of literary decorum made some of the most talented 18th-century English poets if not positively mad, then at least highly unconventional in the ways they lived and wrote. However different they are from each other, Blake, Cowper, Collins and Christopher Smart certainly share this ability to disconcert the reader: and these were modes of poetic utterance which were far from fashionable at the time.

George Crabbe (1754-1832) is not like that. As rational as the next man in powdered wig and breeches, a down-to-earth satirist and grim social observer, his only form of excess was the opium habit; and that was so common and so well-concealed in the polite society of the time that not many of his acquaintances became aware of it. But his wife went mad; he failed to get the preferment that was his due; and he lived a sordid life in his rural Norfolk parish, comforted by the practice of writing verses about the harsh and struggling lives that he observed around him.

"I sing the cot / As truth will have it and as bards will not", he claimed in one of his characteristically dry and forceful couplets. *Peter Grimes*, written like the rest in verse as orthodox but as descriptively vivid as Pope's, is the most famous, as it is the most powerful, of the tales that make up *The Borough*. For Crabbe did achieve fame of a sort, even in his lifetime. Dr Johnson approved of him; he influenced Wordsworth and the other Romantics; he was respected by Byron, who twice commends him in his own poetry. Jane Austen says in a letter that she would have liked him for a husband. She was being flippant, no doubt, for it is hard to imagine her being married to anyone, let alone Crabbe, but it shows how highly she prized an intellect and a sensibility which, in its powers of dramatising daily life, was not so very different from her own.

Crabbe got to know Sarah Hoare, bluesocket daughter of a rich Quaker banker who lived in Hampstead. Hoare knew all the poets of the age as well as the politicians; and Sarah and her stepmother appointed themselves as nurses and muses to Crabbe.

## THE VOLUNTARY INSANE

By George Crabbe  
Richard Cohen, £12.99

cheering the parson poet and judging the compositions he submitted to their scrutiny. At their house he met Wilberforce, Maria Edgeworth, Mrs Siddons, and other luminaries; Wordsworth too visited the Hoares when he was in London.

Sarah may well have kept manuscripts of Crabbe which she and her fellow judges did not consider quite the thing, as Jane Austen would say. Among these unpublished survivals in the

by, this may have been because she thought it below the poet's usual standard, as well as for the reasons suggested by its discoverer: possible shockiness, and indiscretion where Crabbe's wife was concerned.

In his narrative of an unfortunate girl who lets herself deliberately decline into madness after a baby in her care has died, Crabbe is in fact more earnest and pious than shocking. The metre does not suit him, and the words lack the sardonic grip, the visionary intensity and grim humour of his best work in couplets.

On the other hand, as the editor rightly suggests, the subject itself has a clinical fascination for modern ears, as have the autobiographical implications. Crabbe's wife appears to have exhibited much the same symptoms as the poor girl in the poem, perhaps for the same reason: four of her six children died young, and she may have affected madness as a shield against guilt or blame. No wonder Crabbe's benefactress thought it best, as well as more discreet, to lay the poem away in a drawer.

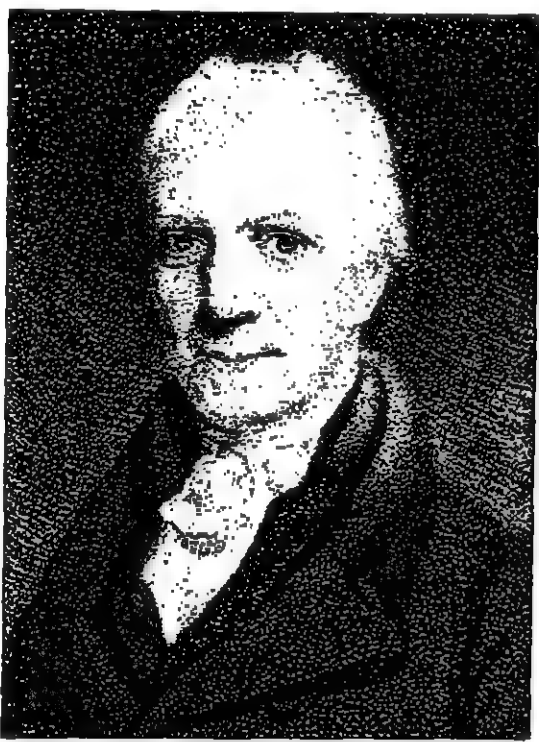
Yet it is certainly a work of considerable interest, not only for Crabbe-lovers; and it is presented here in a sensible and elegant edition. As poetry, its level can reasonably be appreciated by the final stanza.

*'Twas Eventide — the flocks were penned  
And Shepherds whistled o'er the Lea:  
But e'er that Summer Night had end  
The Maid was from*

*Life's burden free.  
Alone she died; no eye could see  
The Signs without of Thoughtless  
Wit —  
Judge not — thine own Temptation flee.  
Nor parley with the Strength of Sin —*

Fluent rather than inspired — those whistling shepherds are all too conventional a property of the age — it nonetheless reveals Crabbe's keen and clinical eye for the sadness of things.

The more powerful section of the poem analyses the progress of the girl's malady, from natural kindness (hugging children "she seems to feel the Peace she makes") to harsh indifference. And this has all the sombre force of Crabbe at his best.



Crabbe: Jane Austen fancied him as a husband

Hoare Notebook is *The Voluntary Insane*, a long poem on the theme of madness, now edited by Felix Pryor, who engagingly describes himself as "earning my living by discovering manuscripts", and who is descended from Sarah Hoare's sister.

With the natural pride of a successful explorer, Pryor claims that this newfound poem is "George Crabbe's masterpiece". This is going rather too far. By contrast not only with such powerful narratives in *The Borough* as *Peter Grimes* and *Ellen Orford*, but also with Crabbe's other published "mad" poems like the vivid and hallucinatory *Sir Eustace Grey*, *The Voluntary Insane* seems to me commonplace enough. If, as seems possible, Sarah Hoare tactfully put it



Another Italian self-portrait: in 1924 Brancusi photographed himself at work on *Endless Column* in his studio (in Elizabeth Bowen's *Brancusi Photographs Brancusi*, Thames & Hudson, £12.95)

## World-besotted sex tourist

Alain de Botton

USES AND ABUSES  
By Aldo Busi  
Translated by Stuart Hood  
Faber, £4.99

READING Aldo Busi is akin to being cornered by a garrulous, egotistical, sarcastic, clever but often very funny man with an urgent wish to regale you with every detail of his recent trips abroad. Busi has travelled to most corners of the globe, apparently in order to write journalistic pieces about which we hear very little and cannot quite imagine. What we do hear about are Busi's feelings towards the countries he visits, which are largely negative ones, though never as negative as those he reserves for his native Italy. Interspersed with reports are reminiscences of Busi's childhood, his thoughts on the meaning of life, and an explicit recollection of his homosexual exploits.

Busi must have generous employers, because he invariably gets to stay in the smartest hotel in town, always raids the mini-bar (he is very good on the topic), and does not seem to have much work to do. He gets sent to Reykjavik along with a photographer whom he hates, refuses to talk to and nicknames Candid-Camera. After spending most of his time in the

hotel or a nearby bar, he finally decides to interview the President of Iceland, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir. Charmed by her, he skips all mention of politics. (Iceland has no problems anyway, judges Busi, not next to Italy), and asks her where she gets her clothes from. Paris, she answers, but begs him not to write this, since she has recently flattered a journalist from *Bunte* by telling him it was Germany.

Busi next goes off on a Latin American tour, which allows him to indulge his bleak satirical humour to the full. There are sketches of threatening drug barons, collapsing motorways, chaotic cities, incongruously luxurious hotels and appalling squalor and deprivation. Busi travels from Caracas to Bogotá, then to Brasília and Rio, all the while making the reader feel very

glad that he stayed home. Things improve somewhat when Busi goes off to Spain, which he likes, and Algeria, where he has lots of sex. Unfortunately, he then has to go off to South Korea to cover the Olympics, though he hates sport, and then Japan, where no one will talk to him, apart from a brief conversation he has with a Japanese man whom he has accidentally squirmed with while preparing a cup of coffee on a Bullet Train.

BUSI'S PROSE style has an impatience, energy and bile that sometimes threaten to turn it into a rant. If he is ultimately saved from the charge, it is because he knows when to leave matters with an ironic touch. "I very much like melancholy persons," he tells us, "for the first five minutes. And I also like timid people — if they are not more than 15 years old."

Nevertheless, when we reach the end of *Uses and Abuses* we are likely to be exhausted and perhaps exasperated by Busi. Despite the book's many charms, it would be hard to recommend placing it too far up any reading list.

## Counting cosmic visions

There was a country where they were all thieves... Everybody robbed everybody else, until one day an honest man interrupted the cycle, throwing everything into disarray. Italo Calvino wrote *The Black Sheep* in 1943, when he was only 20, and yet as an Italian political allegory its relevance is untarnished. The style of such early pieces is blunt and naive in comparison to his later works; but their ironic moral tone, finely rendered by Tim Parks's translation, still hits the mark. "One writes fables in periods of oppression," he wrote. His predilection for this form lasted longer than Mussolini, as this collection demonstrates.

*Numbers in the Dark* includes short stories, dialogues and the beginnings of unfinished novels, gathered here for the first time. They span Calvino's entire writing career from 1943 to 1985. In the first section to 1958, covering his years as a Communist Party member, themes of politics and war dominate. *Becalmed in the Antilles* was written in 1957, the year he left the party over the invasion of Hungary, and it satirises the postwar deadlock between the Italian Communists and the Christian Demo-

Harriet Paterson

## NUMBERS IN THE DARK

By Italo Calvino  
Jonathan Cape, £15.99

crats as an encounter in a flat calm between Drake's fleet and the Spaniards. This story preserved its immediacy for a further 25 years.

This pairing-down of intricate situations to the simplest kernel is the exact opposite of the later Calvino who ramifies, questions and complicates even the simplest gesture. Every action, however insignificant, generates infinite associations stretching back in time and space. Turning a tap or releasing a petrol pump diverts Calvino's intense narrative attention down to the subterranean strata from which the water or oil is being drawn. He has become a cosmic visionary, who sees a tree in every splinter of wood, the whole of human history in a lump of ice.

Logical conclusions give way to illogical extremes, an obsession with the *reductio ad absurdum* which can lead to a kind of madness, generating feelings of anxiety and vertigo in the reader. These are then compounded by the apocalyptic conclusions which issue forth from Calvino's notorious melancholy. In 1975 he sees a second ice age threatening, in 1976 the extinction of resources, in 1984 the galaxy imploding.

However, the author does not abandon his reader without offering a lifeline of control. He defies annihilation by writing ceaselessly, creating an inventory of the disappearing planet. This is the exact task of the characters in the 1968 story *World Memory* who must make "a catalogue of everything." The task is impossible but the principle is fortifying. "I've been getting used to imagining the future without flinching," Calvino writes. The precision and lucidity of his prose testify to his steady gaze.

## From Welsh wizard to tweedy leftist don

Stephen Logan

### RAYMOND WILLIAMS

By Fred Inglis  
Routledge, £19.99

An only life may take so long to climb / clear of its wrong beginnings, and may never." Thus Philip Larkin, with the insight that made foresight sound like hindsight. Raymond Williams's beginnings were not wrong, except in the sense of suggesting possibilities which later life precludes. But, the loyalties and allegiances he formed during his working-class childhood in South Wales proved unusually hard to reconcile with the demands of his academic career. Consequently, he suffered from the anguish of inner exile.

He represented this, to others and, apparently, to himself, as a conflict between the wish to live in Wales and the need to work in Cambridge. (He kept homes in both places). The border country that his childhood home had occupied became for him a potent symbol of his state. He was torn — yet effortlessly poised — between two countries and two classes. The endless variety of socio-political phenomena were perpetually resolving themselves, within Williams's fanatic heart, into the elements of a personal conflict.

Williams was born in 1921. His father, Harry, was a railway signalman who became a union branch secretary. It is easy to see here the roots of Williams's romantic socialism. From his father also stems his diligence as a writer (more than 20 books of cultural commentary, seven novels, three plays, and several thousand newspaper articles).

His mother, by contrast, provided him with a pattern of

resignation, for on personal matters her husband was an unusually silent man. His decisions — as to the naming of their son, for instance — emerged from a dark private self to which verbal access was denied. As Fred Inglis observes, in a narrative at once acute, scholarly and informal: "Harry lived a deep contradiction between gregariousness and withdrawal which he taught his son." When Williams died in 1988, his death was announced on radio: his work evoked a public response beyond his academic circle.

Raymond Williams was an unusual academic, not least in being regularly described as a seer. There must have been many occasions during his lectures, when he did not have his eyes closed, his head thrown back and his words issuing forth in a steady, slightly mystifying meditative



Williams (left) with Frank Kermode, Cambridge 1981

torrent. Yet that is how he is remembered by many of those whose testimony is recorded in this vividly documented book — more biographical essay than biography.

Whether Williams actually was a seer, or only looked like one, depends in part on how we answer one question. What was it — among the things which some people count su-

premiably valuable — that Williams is believed to have seen more clearly than most? Those who give an answer in terms of his relations with Marxism divide him from a broader readership. And there seems to me a peculiar impropriety in doing that: for one of the things that Williams undoubtedly saw was the impropriety of any form of public discourse — such as literary criticism — which complacently addresses itself solely to a closed social or professional coterie.

His sympathies were profoundly pro-democratic. If he differed, in his writings, from the generality of intellectuals who defend working-class culture, it was because he flouted factions, including the political ones which tried to co-opt him as a propagandist.

One of the things which gave Williams quasi-heroic status among working-class

intellectuals was his belief that high culture was merely a variant of popular culture. Defending the right of popular art forms (such as television) to be taken seriously was clearly a gesture of homage to his parents; and one to which the hearts of many literary left-wingers would return an echo. For all his determination to lecture on films, and to question the scope of the English syllabus at Cambridge, Williams was no stage iconoclast: his practical experience included active service as a tank officer, followed by 15 years extramural teaching.

I was brought up 20 miles away from Williams, in a similar South Welsh environment. I work in the Cambridge English Faculty, recognise "the sheer bloodmindedness of British academic life" and miss what the mountains represent. Yet, despite these

potential affinities, I do not find myself drawn to his writings. The testimony gathered in Inglis's genial and absorbing book suggests that the experience is not uncommon. Ostensibly, the problem lies in the abstract over-elaborations of Williams's style. Yet this in turn emerges from Williams's habit of avoiding introspection.

When, in 1977, Williams suffered a breakdown, he was born not understanding it. The attempt at introspection had "stirred some very deep sediments", Williams's response had been to develop a style of deliberate obliqueness, which protected him from his own inward gaze, but estranged him from the class (and maybe the father) he wished to communicate with.

Political convictions derive from personal allegiances. It is the strength of Williams's writings to suggest this, their weakness to flinch from acknowledging it fully.

## Revenant in the republic of letters

Giles Coren

### BELLE DU SEIGNEUR

By Albert Cohen  
Viking, £20

tions of a disappearing foreign bourgeoisie?

Central to the plot is Solal. He it is who carries the great solipsistic weight of all Cohen's work. For *Belle du Seigneur* is the last in a trilogy of novels that charts Solal's rise from a childhood in the Jewish community of Cepha-

lonia to Under Secretary-General at the League of Nations in Geneva. The first two novels, *Solal* and *Mangeclous*, were published in the 1930s, in a climate still haunted by Proust and dominated by James Joyce. This, the final part, was 30 years in the making, and it shows.

The first third of the novel belongs to Adrien Deume, a grade B minion of Solal at the League of Nations. Deume is petit bourgeois, gauche, and covetous of acceptance in the highest circles. As he sits at his desk, pen-pushing and gushing streams of consciousness,

it is almost painful to witness his thought processes — his tragic and paradoxical aspirations are so like our own. The miserable human mind deserves more privacy than this.

The great Solal accepts an invitation to dinner chez Deume, and for 100 pages we are subjected to the flusterings of the Deume household as the meal is planned. The menu, printed on fancy little place cards, will have foie gras, caviare, smoked salmon, a number of delicacies obscenely and ostentatiously piled upon each other. Deume's hisping and ineffectual father

reads aloud from an etiquette book on how to butter a bread roll and drink from the side of a soup spoon, his mother instructs the hired butler, Adrien prepares conversational fireworks and fests. But Solal, in accordance with the fatalistic drive of the narrative, will not come. And if he did, he would share our snobish revulsion.

All this is but preamble to Solal's seduction of Deume's wife, Ariane. She leaves her bedraggled bureaucrat for his brilliant and beautiful boss. But, such is the nature of human passion, and such was

Cohen's bleak obsession with it, that their love, too, must putrefy. The depiction of the relationship's collapse is miserable and, ultimately, horrific. It is the very opposite of the climax of *Ulysses*. No returns, no reunions, no rebirth.

AND THEN the gloom goes deeper. For this is the life of a European Jew in the 1930s. What hope for the future even if the course of love does run smooth? Solal has, to some extent, denied his Jewishness to reach the exalted social position he enjoys. But his uncles, known as the valiant, self-styled knight-errant defenders of the Solal cause, make several entrances to remind him of his roots.

Grotesque, parodic caricatures of lechery, acquisitiveness and vice, they play a strange role, challenging anti-Semitic prejudice by pandering to it so obtusely. In earlier manifestations they were picaresquely comical. Here, as Nazism looms unmentioned on the borders, they are dangerous.

And so the novel rambles on, seldom more than the sum of its parts, never a page turner, but always exquisitely rendered; a strange artefact frozen in suspended animation and then brought to life again in a less self-conscious age. Like so much that came out of that time, it is difficult to pin down, difficult to read, and difficult to ignore.



## Cold snap retains hold on fixtures

FROST kept its grip on the racing programme as more fixtures were called off yesterday. The meeting scheduled for Kempton yesterday was abandoned after overnight snow compounded the existing problems with frost, and the four set for today — Carlisle, Plumpton, Stratford and Taunton — had been lost by noon yesterday.

Taunton and Plumpton fell within minutes of each other after early-morning inspections, and were soon joined by Carlisle and Stratford. All four tracks are frozen.

Tomorrow's fixture at Newcastle has also fallen to a combination of frost and snow, and inspections are planned for the day's remaining three meetings. Farnham and Newbury will inspect at 9.30 this morning, with Warwick's prospects to be decided at 12.30.

There is an inspection at 9.00 tomorrow to check on Catterick's programme for Saturday, and the best hopes of a resumption of National Hunt racing rest with another of Saturday's cards, Folkestone, where there is a light covering of snow but no frost in the ground.

In Ireland, yesterday's meeting at Leopardstown was cancelled and put back to Saturday to replace the scheduled meeting at Punchestown, which, in turn, has been rescheduled for next Wednesday. Prospects for today's meeting at Leopardstown also look bleak. There is a 7.00 inspection there.

Looking further ahead, next Tuesday's meeting at Ayr is already under threat. The Scottish track lost this week's Boxing Day fixture because of frost and the course manager, Mark Kershaw, said yesterday: "There has not been much change and it is still freezing."

Wolverhampton arranges additional meeting for Saturday

## Fresh opportunities ease frost's bite

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

OFFICIALS moved with admirable swiftness yesterday to resurrect some of the top races which have fallen victim to a freeze-up destined to continue for the rest of this week.

With severe frost wiping out any racing in Britain for the second successive day yesterday, plans were hatched to stage the lost feature races, in one shape or another, over the next few weeks — with entries for three rearranged or new events closing at noon today.

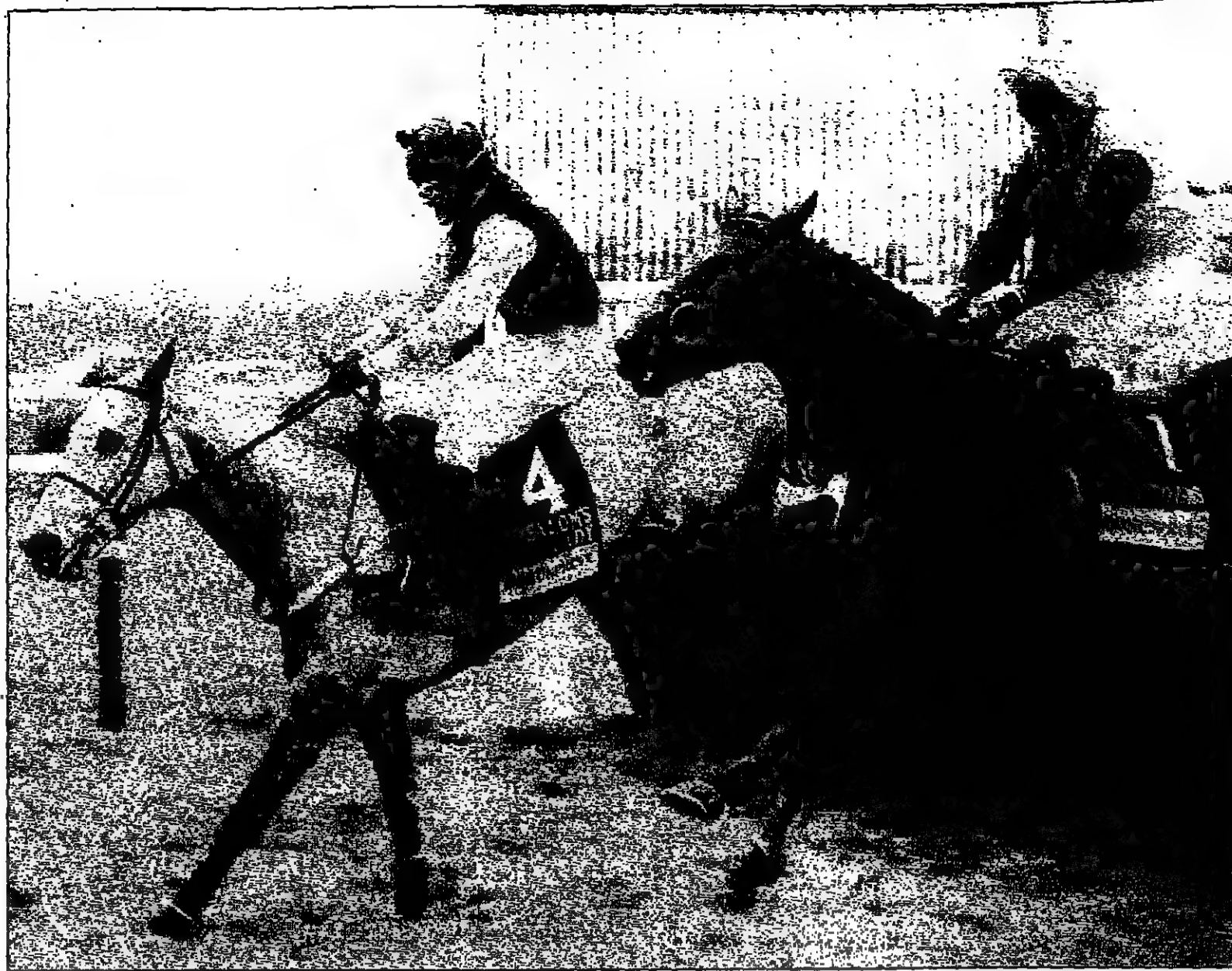
After a day of hectic discussions, involving the British Horseracing Board's (BHB) race planning department, the Levy Board, sponsors and racecourses, the BHB announced a package of measures to assist racing after the losses inflicted by the extreme weather.

They include an extra all-weather Flat meeting at Wolverhampton this Saturday afternoon, which will be staged in addition to an existing evening meeting at the Midlands track. Entries for the new fixture close at midday today.

Cheltenham on New Year's Day will be expanded to include two races designed specifically for horses aimed originally at the Bonusprint Christmas Hurdle and Castleford Chase, which were lost to the weather at Kempton and Wetherby respectively yesterday. Both races, over two miles, will be limited handicaps with a 14lb weight range aimed at maximising competitiveness — with entries also closing at noon today.

Prize-money for the Peter Ross Novices' Chase at Ascot on January 13 will be increased from £12,000 to £21,000 after the loss of the Tripleprint Feltham Novices' Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day. The race is over a similar distance of three miles.

After the loss of the Coral Welsh National at Chepstow yesterday, the race scheduled to be run as the John Hughes Grand National Trial at Chepstow on February 3 will be renamed the Coral Grand National Trial with £25,000 added to stakes.



The grey Absalom's Lady beating Atours in last season's Christmas Hurdle at Kempton, a replacement for which will be run at Cheltenham

The extra six-race meeting at Wolverhampton this Saturday will go ahead only if sufficient entries have been received by noon today. The extra races planned for Cheltenham next Monday — the Levy Board Limited Handicap Chase and the Bonusprint Limited Handicap Hurdle — mean the eight-race card will start at 11.50am.

According to the London Weather Centre last night, there is no immediate sign of a let-up in the Arctic conditions but BHB officials were taking heart from a forecast of rising temperatures over the weekend. Should the Cheltenham meeting fall to the weather, the Bonusprint Hurdle will be switched to Sandown on January 6.

After the expected cancellation of Kempton yesterday, the King George VI Tripleprint Chase will be the feature event at Sandown on the same day. Meanwhile, the Matthew

McCloy controversy refuses to go away. After the decision by the Racehorse Owners' Association (ROA) to ask the chairman of the BHB's industry committee to consider his position last week, the National Trainers' Federation (NTF) stepped into the fray yesterday.

An election is due to take place next month to fill the vacancy created on the BHB in June when Michael Darnell steps down as one of the three

industry committee elected directors.

Nominations for the vacancy are due to close on January 3, with the election planned to take place two weeks later. Despite the controversy surrounding his much publicised flight to the United States, McCloy has been favourite to be elected unopposed.

However, Peter Cundell, president of the NTF, confirmed yesterday his organisation is seeking a delay in the

election. "We are recommending to the industry committee that the election is postponed until April. After the letter from the ROA, there is a need for a cooling-off period."

The request for a delay will be supported by the breeders and, interestingly, John Reid, a leading member of the Jockeys' Association, said yesterday that while McCloy appeared to be a good chairman "you would have to question his judgment."

## Nielsen's absence costs him funding

By RICHARD EATON

ANDERS NIELSEN has been denied funding for the second time by the Badminton Association of England, which means he will have to pay his own way to tournaments until the end of the Olympic Games qualifying period if he is to get to Atlanta.

Nielsen, the national champion, is being punished for again pulling out of a British grand slam tournament without a medical certificate, in this case the Friends Provident Hampshire Open at Portsmouth, which starts today.

When the Surrey man did the same thing in Perth in September, he was denied funding until the end of January, and the extension of this ban for another three months means that by the start of the Games in August, Nielsen will have spent about £6,000 of his own money travelling abroad.

The Association is angered that Nielsen's actions make it impossible for it to promote the British grand slam circuit properly, but Nielsen claims that the floors at Portsmouth are so hard that they constitute a fitness risk. "I'm already paying my own way to the Finnish and Portuguese Opens next month so I can't take a chance with my knees. The floors are a disgrace at Portsmouth and players have written and complained about them before," Nielsen said.

However, Tom Marrs, the Association's events director, replied: "He must be getting desperate. It's the same type of floor as 90 per cent of leisure centres in this country and many top players have played on it without complaint."

Nielsen's increasing rift with his national association suggests that the 28-year-old is going to retire after the Games. Whether or not he actually gets there, however, is very much in question. He is ranked No 40 in the world, 11 places behind Darren Hall, the former European champion, and nine behind Peter Knowles, the Scottish Open champion — and only two Britons can qualify in each event for Atlanta.

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# The sport of the future grappling with its past

David Powell looks at the growing pains triathlon is enduring in its struggle for Olympic acceptance

Triathlon was introduced to spectators at an international race in Sydney as "The Sport of the New Millennium". As the first event on the programme at the 2000 Olympic Games in the same city, triathlon will not lack opportunity to give that bold prediction a flying start, but will the swim-bike-run brigade be ready for their grand entrance?

It is 15 months since the International Olympic Committee (IOC) granted triathlon Olympic status within 20 years of the sport's beginnings. The elevation precipitated both celebration and argument. The Olympics wants triathlon but wants it to change.

A well-oiled triathlon machine would be an asset to the Olympics because it does, after all, pull three of the original Olympic disciplines into one. At its best, triathlon can be spectacular and exciting, but often races are predictable. Les McDonald, the president of the International Triathlon Union (ITU), believes that, unless the sport adapts, it may be cast out of the Games as quickly as it was reeled in.

"We are on the programme provisionally," McDonald said. He opines that, to safeguard its Olympic status, triathlon must work on its television exposure, marketing and spectator appeal and, to be successful in those areas, fundamental changes are necessary. "The argument I have heard is that, other than athletics and swimming, all sports are now provisional and you have to prove you are part of the mainstream. You have to prove you are modern."

Led by McDonald, the sport's metamorphosis has begun, though he risks unpopularity among the mass amateur ranks and some professionals for tampering. Ask a club triathlete for an opinion on the most contentious issue in the sport — that of drafting, cycling in a rival's slipstream — and he or she will probably reject it. McDonald, though, was in the vanguard of its introduction into the ITU world championships last season. Some professionals boycotted in protest.

Last month, the ITU



A triathlete leads the 112-mile cycling leg of the Ironman race in Hawaii, with his rivals lining up their challenges in his wake. Photograph: Mike Powell/Allsport

legalised drafting for all its events. No longer must competitors keep a specified distance apart on the cycling stage. The decision makes it practically certain that drafting will be allowed in the Olympics. "The ITU resolution ensures that the Olympics will be a draft-legal race," McDonald said. "If we had lost the vote, there would have been no World Cup because television would have lost interest. Non-drafting races are boring."

As if to mark McDonald's



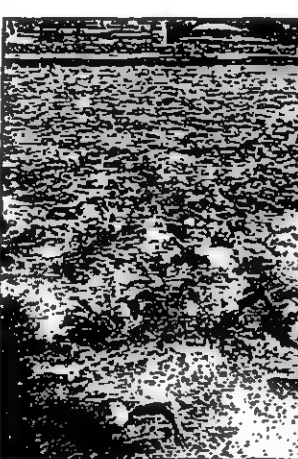
Smith: protested against change

point, the ITU negotiated a marketing and television agreement with Pacific Sports and Entertainment (PSE) last week that, according to PSE, will take triathlon "to a different plateau". PSE's main shareholder is The News Corporation, parent company of *The Times*, and the deal embraces development of the world championships and World Cup series over the next five years.

"This event is going to be changed to be more commercial and it will be a lot more lucrative for the athletes," Paul Morgan, of PSE, an Australian company that owns Brisbane Broncos rugby league club, said. The World Cup is rivalled by the professional tour, but Morgan suggested that, "over a period of time", it would attract all the leading competitors with superior prize-money.

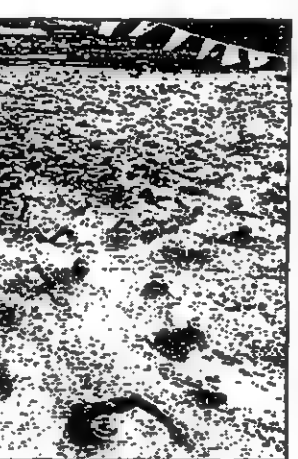
In the past, the ITU has used sponsorship money to pay for television coverage, but Morgan believes that will change. "Considering that our major shareholder is News Corporation, I expect Star television, Sky TV and Fox will be very interested," Morgan said. Among McDonald's priori-

ties now is "clover leaf" racing, whereby each discipline is held over a multi-lap circuit in a compressed area. "This ties in with the idea of a television spectacular which is spectator friendly," he said. "You cannot watch triathlon if the competitors disappear from view for long periods." There is a feeling among club triathletes that their sport should not be changed for the sake of greater recognition through television and the Olympics. They endorse the opinion of Spencer Smith,



Competitors struggle to find enough space to swim in a massed start to the 1994 Ironman event

Britain's former world champion, who said: "I came into triathlon when it was an individual sport — swim, bike and run as fast as you can. Now it is not that way. All it is, in effect, is a run race." It is interference with pure endurance sport and tradition, the argument goes. Drafting favours those strong on the run, the final discipline, because it allows weaker cyclists to slipstream on the second phase. As Simon Lessing, the world champion from Britain, admitted,



Lessing: will not defend his title

though he favours drafting: "If you come off the bike with 40 athletes, which is quite likely, you might just get some unknown, who has been sitting in, win because he is a fast runner." Drafting invites team tactics, which may add to the fascination but, according to Barry Voevodin, a columnist in *220*, the triathlon magazine, makes it vulnerable to "all sorts of domestic agendas".

According to Voevodin: "Their job would be to stick with their team buddy in the swim and bring them up to, or keep them ahead of, the bunch. At the conclusion of the cycle, the fresh-legged drafter runs off to victory while the domestic walks or jogs the run course as a warm down. To suggest this would not happen is naive." McDonald argues that judging what is a legal or illegal drafting distance can be difficult and, seeing how sport is increasingly appearing before the courts, such doubtful areas that separate winners from losers should be avoided. The penalty for drafting in races that do not allow it is a "stop and go", putting both feet on the

ground before restarting. The image of the punishment worries McDonald, more a Mr Bean sketch than sport. "Spectators ask what he is doing. 'Oh, he's getting off his bike, he's putting his feet down, he's getting back on.' Come on, give me a break..." McDonald is perceived by some in triathlon as an autocrat. He won his age group at the Hawaii Ironman triathlon five times, but the event has come to be his enemy. Hawaii operates outside the ITU, as does the professional tour.



Lessing: will not defend his title

Last month, with the Ironman a target, the ITU hardened its line against events portraying themselves as world championships. Any elite athlete who competes in a "self-declared" world event next year, it said, would be banned from ITU world championships and World Cup races until the end of 1997. According to McDonald, the IOC has demanded that his federation demonstrates its authority. He added that, if the problem persists, athletes could be banned from the Olympics.

Lessing laments the fragmentation. Smith and others boycotted the 1995 ITU triathlon world championships in Cancun, Mexico, in protest over drafting and Lessing does not intend to defend in 1996 because he believes there are too many championships. This issue, and the drafting boycott, are symptomatic of a sport young in years but ageing politically.

Not that Lessing is anti-ITU. Though he competed in the professional tour rather than the World Cup this year, he said: "For me, the ideal situation would be one World Cup series. You cannot fight the ITU. We need the ITU. Our sport is so young, everybody should be trying to work together."

The ITU's attempt to be responsible was evident in Cancun. Having taken the championships to Latin America for the first time, it put on its inaugural junior development camp there. "When we get to the Olympic Games, we have to be able to say these athletes have been developed as triathletes and we have not pinched them from swimming, running or biking," Sarah Springman, the ITU vice-president, said. It decided to no longer stage under-16 championships, not wishing to expose young athletes to intense competition at hot and often humid venues.

Given that drafting increases the probability of the first Olympic champions hinging on the ten kilometre run, should not the BTA be tempting Britain's best runners to try triathlon? Now that Africans dominate, no British man is going to win a medal in Sydney at 10,000 metres.

Andrew Pearson, the European cross country bronze medal-winner, swims and cycles with club riders as part of his athletics training and races ten kilometres two minutes faster than Lessing and Smith. Pearson might consider that his Olympic chances would be greater in "the sport of the new millennium".

## SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather (Sun)	Last snow
ANDORRA					
Soldeu	20	80 fair crusty	loy cloud	-6	26/12
(Mixed conditions after hard re-freeze)					
AUSTRIA					
Kitzbühel	20	75 powder powder	fair snow	-3	27/12
(Colder temperatures and continuous snowfalls)					
Meyrhofen	5	40 good powder	closed fog	-1	27/12
(15cm of new snow on varied base; poor visibility)					
Schladming	40	50 good powder	good cloud	-1	26/12
(Great skiing with powdery snow on all pistes)					
Söld	20	66 good powder	closed snow	-6	27/12
(Great skiing on and off piste; resort runs open soon)					
St Anton	10	180 good powder	good fair	-8	27/12
(Superb powder skiing everywhere; runs a little crowded)					
FRANCE					
Aiguille d'Huez	30	180 good varied	loy sun	-10	26/12
(High runs good, lower very icy — sharp edges needed)					
Avoriaz	40	80 good varied	good sun	-12	27/12
(More runs now open after new snow; very long queues)					
Megeve	5	15 fair none	closed snow	-3	27/12
(Skiing still limited but now colder; snow forecast)					
Tignes	75	130 good powder	good sun	-11	27/12
(Superb skiing on perfect snow; high avalanche risk)					
Val d'Isère	65	130 good powder	good sun	-8	27/12
(Pistes excellent with fresh snow; more runs now open)					
Val Thorens	50	90 good varied	good fine	-7	27/12
(Great skiing with new snow; 3 valleys links now open)					
ITALY					
Cervinia	30	200 good powder	good fine	-4	26/12
(All pistes in superb condition; 2025 lifts open)					
SWITZERLAND					
C Montana	0	75 good varied	closed fine	-6	27/12
(Upper slopes good, lower hard where skiable)					
Mürren	25	110 good powder	good fine	-8	27/12
(Excellent skiing with new snow at all altitudes)					
Verbier	30	120 good powder	worn fine	-2	27/12
(Great powder skiing but avalanche danger persisting)					

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes, U - upper, art - artificial.

## Cardiff to make official complaint

By NORMAN DE MESQUITA

CARDIFF Devils, the leaders of ice hockey's British League premier division, are to lodge an official complaint about the performance of the referee, Graham Horner, in their Boxing Day win over Nottingham Panthers.

David Temme, the team owner, said: "Perhaps if we had lost, we would have thought twice about complaining, because it would probably have been seen as sour grapes. But we won and, after watching a video of the game, we have to complain."

The Devils had two goals disallowed but Nico Toemen, the British Ice Hockey Association's chief referee, said both decisions were correct. "Graham Horner is one of the best referees in Europe," Toemen said, "but he is not good enough for the prima donna imports in Cardiff who want us to referee the way they want to play hockey."

Cardiff's win enabled them to stay four points ahead of Sheffield Steelers, although the Steelers have three games in hand. Playing the second of three games in four days, Sheffield did no more than they had to and just beat Basingstoke Bison in an excellent game.

They held on 4-3 thanks to an outstanding performance by their goaltender, Wayne Cowley. Tony Hand, who has gained a new lease of life since his move from Edinburgh, was involved in three of the four Sheffield goals and was a constant threat to the Bison.

Blackburn Hawks and Manchester Storm are dominating the first division in much the same way as Cardiff and Sheffield are controlling the premier division. The Storm are two points behind the Hawks with two games in hand. Dumfries Border Vikings and Telford Tigers are not far behind, but the top two should continue to lead the way.

So far, this season has been

one of increasing dominance by foreign-born players. It has become far too easy to qualify as "British" and teams have become top heavy with Canadians, whose tenuous links with the United Kingdom allow them to fly under a flag of convenience.

This certainly applies to the national team whose coach, Peter Woods, seems obsessed by Canadian-born players, many of whom are past their

## TABLES

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Cardiff	20	15	4	1	159	66	211
Sheffield	17	12	2	3	126	62	27
Nottingham	16	12	5	1	126	76	25
Durham	17	9	5	3	102	77	21
Hammersley	16	9	7	0	101	107	18
Basingstoke	17	7	9	1	75	86	15
Pite	17	6	8	4	92	128	14
Milton Keynes	18	3	10	5	98	123	11
Slough	19	3	14	2	93	156	9
Worcester	17	3	14	0	66	145	6

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Blackburn	28	24	1	2	272	130	49
Manchester	26	23	2	1	272	107	47
Dumfries	29	21	7	1	227	133	43
Telford	30	21	8	1	248	172	43
Bradford	28	18	8	3	242	142	39
Sunderland	28	19	9	1	228	169	39
Guilford	26	16	7	3	202	135	35
Preston	28	13	13	2	200	167	28
Mosley	30	11	15	2	172	203	24
Chesham	29	8	17	4	151	207	29
Peterborough	29	6	21	2	136	271	14
Stratford	30	3	25	2	149	298	8
Murrayfield	28	3	24	1	87	270	7
Birmingham	29	2	27	0	128	358	4

best, to the exclusion of British-trained talent. Such a shortsighted policy has caused several promising British players to leave the sport because of lack of opportunity.

Gary Douville, when coach of Telford Tigers, summed it up best when he said: "Just because someone is Canadian does not mean he is necessarily a good player."

But with the European ruling that has forced the football authorities to rethink their rules on foreign players, inexperienced coaches will continue to prefer importing ready-made players rather than nurturing native talent. Opportunities for players like Tony Hand in the future will become increasingly rare.

## SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This hand was played in a recent charity tournament.

Dealer West North - South game Match-pointed pairs

♠	A 10 9 8 4	♥	J 7 3 2
♦	9 3 2	♣	10 8
♠	K 7 6 3	♥	8 5 4
♦	10 6 2	♣	Q 10 9 5
♠		♥	
♦		♣	
♠		♥	
♦		♣	

W N E S  
Pass 2 NT Pass 6 H  
All pass

Contract: Six Hearts by South. Lead: Ace of Spades

Shireen Sepahbodi was West. There are several Shireens on the London bridge scene; this particular one is called Shireen the Cashmere, after her main source of income (the other source is working the £10 game at TGR's).

The setter of the hands recommended a diamond lead against Six Hearts, on the basis that West might be able to set up a trick there and then get in with the ace of spades to cash it. None of that wimpy stuff for Shireen. You don't spend all day selling pull-overs at £500 a go to make quiet leads in the evening. She led the ace of spades and practically before the other hands finished playing to the trick, now played a diamond.

Look at it from the declarer's point of view. If the clubs are no worse than 3-2, he can win the ace of diamonds, draw trumps and ruff out the clubs. He will make a spade trick, six heart tricks, one diamond and four club tricks. So he rose with the ace of diamonds, drew trumps and set about the clubs. When they broke 4-1 he went down.

Notice the good play of switching to a diamond at trick two — it forces the declarer to make a decision in that suit before he knows what is happening in the clubs. As for a diamond opening lead, what can declarer do? He has to finesse.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

## WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

BECUIBA	CANA
a. A Brazilian dance	a. A spirit
b. A tree	b. Coarse cotton
c. Mexican nepotism	c. Unleavened bread
ECTROMELIA	CHOWCHILLA
a. Limblessness	a. Dog fur
b. A honeycomb	b. Chile con queso
c. Exhibitionism	c. A bird

Answers on page 37

## KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Wish Hastings starting today, the last tournament of the old year and the first of the new, here are my personal awards for the outstanding achievements of 1995.

International personality of the year: Kirsan Ilyumzinov, the new president of Fide, the world chess federation.

Ilyumzinov, who has made a fortune from caviar, as well as being President of the Russian Republic of Kalmykia, ousted Florentino Campomanes as president of Fide at the Paris meeting in November. Ilyumzinov has got off to a good start, reopening bridges with Bobby Fischer by meeting with him in Belgrade and finding sponsorship for the Karpov v Kasparov, Fide championship. This is now set for Montreal next summer with a prize fund of \$1.8 million.

Opening of the year: The Dragon Sicilian.

Although shunned by the elite and not seen at world championship level since 1958 this risky variation was revived by Kasparov as a shock weapon against Anand in their New York world championship match. Kasparov scored three out of four with it and it was instrumental in breaking Anand's resistance.

UK personality of the year: Chris Dunworth.

Dunworth has been the moving force behind a colossal upsurge in the number of international level tournaments in the UK, including the Café Baroque series and the Four Nations League. Wherever one looks, Dunworth is either teaching chess, organising new events or stimulating chess activity.

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

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# Scottish fixture list takes on blank look

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

FOOTBALL in Scotland is facing a near-blank weekend with the Arctic weather conditions unlikely to loosen their grip on the country before then. Only two Scottish League grounds — Ibrox and Tannadice, both of which have undersoil heating — were able to stage matches on Boxing Day and the prospects for Saturday look no better.

Rangers are due to entertain Hibernian in the only Bell's Scottish League premier division match with a realistic chance of going ahead, while Dundee United are scheduled to meet Airdrie in the first division at Tannadice.

At Tynecastle, where Hearts were hoping to entertain Celtic, the chairman, Chris Robinson, said: "The pitch is covered but is hard, and there's no real chance of the game

being on. We will confirm on Friday whether it can go ahead or not." A postponement would be bad news financially for Hearts, whose Boxing Day match against Motherwell also fell victim to the weather.

It will mean the Edinburgh club going nearly six weeks without any gate receipts, with their last home game staged on December 2 and the next Tynecastle match likely to be the rescheduled Motherwell fixture on January 10.

Robinson, whose club is reported to be struggling financially, added: "The lack of funds will be a big strain and we stand to lose up to £30,000 if Saturday's game is postponed. But we have to manage our finances and get on with it."

While recognising that undersoil heating would help, Robinson said that there were no immediate plans to install a heating system. "Under-

soil heating is a must, but at present we have too many priorities at Hearts," he said. "It will be two or three years before we can look at that."

The stadium and team are uppermost in his mind and undersoil heating is the last of our priorities. In real terms, undersoil heating can take a long time to pay for itself. At the same time, we understand how disappointing it must be for our supporters."

Some top-flight clubs believe undersoil heating should be a requirement for premier division status but Robinson said: "I feel that if it is to be mandatory, there should be a time scale similar to the Taylor Report, with clubs being given around five years to complete the work."

If the match is postponed, it will give Celtic selection problems for the Old Firm game against Rangers on January 3. John Hughes, the defend-

er, and the midfield player, Peter Grant, will miss the Celtic Park meeting as they still have one more game of three-match suspensions to complete.

Hamish Walker, a Scottish Football League spokesman, said there were no immediate fears that the cold snap would produce a fixture backlog. Walker said: "There will be no panic here as we will be able to cope with what the weather gives us."

"We have already rescheduled games for January 9, 10, 16 and 17, and while postponements obviously cause headaches, there are not too many midweek matches scheduled over the next few months."

Walker added that growing calls for mandatory undersoil heating at premier division clubs were unlikely to result in a change in League rules. "We would have to go a long way down the line before that became a

reality, although we have had a long and involved series of discussions with a stadia criteria working group and we are awaiting their recommendations on facilities for grounds in Scotland," he said.

"We are looking to improve every aspect of facilities for supporters and, while the report could recommend undersoil heating, I don't think it would be imposed on clubs currently outside the premier division as many couldn't afford it and might win promotion only to go straight back down. It would be difficult to deny any club promotion to the premier division because they have no undersoil heating."

Fergus McCann, the Celtic chief executive, said: "My preferred option would be a winter shutdown similar to the one in Germany, where the league stops between December 15 and February 10."

## St Helens told to prove case or pay the price

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

ST HELENS will have to present sick notes for all but one of their regular first team, who missed the debacle at Wigan on Tuesday, at a Rugby Football League (RFL) inquiry into why such a weakened side was fielded in the 58-4 defeat.

Even though the club claims to have medical certificates to explain a dozen absences, the spirit of St Helens' actions in making a mockery of the final Boxing Day meeting with Wigan will be taken into consideration by an RFL panel next week. If a case to answer is found, the RFL board of directors could well mete out a more severe punishment than the record fines of £8,000 and £12,000, with half suspended, given to Leeds for similar offences last year.

Paul Harrison, the RFL spokesman, said: "We have a responsibility to the near 20,000 crowd who spent hard-earned money going to a match where they expected to see a match between two top teams involving some of the biggest names in the sport."

Signs of miraculous recoveries for St Helens' home Regal Trophy semi-final on Saturday against Warrington, will be watched for. Paul Newlove and Anthony Sullivan, who, between them, have scored 36 tries this season, are said to have little chance of playing. Chris Joynt, a fellow international player, is also doubtful at this stage.

With Alan Hunte and Tommy Martyn among long-term injury victims, the casualty list at Knowsley Road numbers 13. David Howes, the club's chief executive, said: "We have medical certificates for every one. In fact, our problems have become worse because

Chris Morley, our second-row forward, broke a thumb at Wigan and is out for the rest of the season."

Howes added that the club was prepared to justify its actions and would defend itself vigorously. That still does not explain a shameful disregard for the sport's ethics but where Howes does have a point is that a shortened season has presented many exceptional circumstances.

The match at Wigan was the start of a four-match run in 11 days for St Helens in what has become a devalued and largely meaningless centenary championship campaign. For all clubs, the end next month cannot come soon enough, so preparations for the start of the Super League, in March, can begin in earnest.

In the case of Warrington, should they make the Regal Trophy final at Huddersfield on January 13, the club would have to cram three matches from a fixture backlog into the final week of the season; a quite ludicrous scenario.

St Helens are looking to repair some of the public relations damage by allowing children under 16 into the ground for £1 for the semi-final on Saturday. "We are conscious that there are many games over the Christmas period and people have limited budgets," Howes said. It is a pity the same attitude was not adopted on Boxing Day.

Leeds may increase an £80,000 offer for Glen Tomlinson, Batley's highly-rated Australian scrum half. They have continuing problems at half back after a torn arm muscle and another potentially lengthy lay-off for Tony Kemp.

## League sets sights on better facilities

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

NEGLECTED, crumbling stadiums and inadequate facilities were yesterday identified as the biggest problems facing rugby league as it gears for the launch in March of the Super League. Mark Newton, the Rugby Football League's (RFL) recently-appointed director of marketing, said: "It's a common problem for all club chairmen — should we buy a new player or rebuild the toilet blocks?"

Newton is a newcomer to the sport's historic and myriad deficiencies, after eight years marketing Surrey County Cricket Club. Making widespread ground improvements is a pre-requisite for the funds distributed to the 33 professional clubs under the £87 million Super League deal, but the scale of the task can only mean progress is gradual.

Newton identified football's ground improvements in the past decade as an indication of the way forward for rugby league.

"We know we can deliver a fantastic product on the field, but if a family of four comes to watch a game and the two kids cannot see from the terracing, or Dad cannot park his car easily, they won't come

again," he warned in an interview in *Rugby League Express*. A disappointing and badly-attended centenary championship season is hardly the ideal platform on which to build. Rather than the television deal taking Super League into 150 million homes worldwide, Newton is hoping to increase attendances by a corporate form of match-day entertainment in more inviting grounds suitable for families.

"Supporters of our game have tremendous brand loyalty and would find it hard to suddenly drop that loyalty," Newton said, "but the switch [to playing in the summer] gives us a tremendous opportunity to tap into a huge new market. We'll be setting attendance targets for each club."

Squad numbers, as in the FA Carling Premiership, are under consideration, as are standardised admission prices. "The success of Paris and London is also vital and I'll be working very closely with them. They already have good infrastructures and Paris are making rapid progress. I think they'll surprise a few people," Newton said.

## Jones fails to see the error of his ways

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

IN THE latest chapter of a career that is fast degenerating into total ridicule — if it has not plumbed such depths already — Vinnie Jones, the Wimbledon midfielder player, is to review a tape of his sending-off during the 2-1 victory over Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday. That it happened on Boxing Day was, for once, inappropriate. Jones' eleventh dismissal in ten years was for committing two offences that were deemed cautionable by Dermot Gallagher, the referee.

When the red card was held aloft in the 53rd minute, it was for Jones' tackle from behind — at best, ill-judged; at worst, reckless — on Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea sweeper. It was probably one of the easier decisions that Gallagher has had to make in his years of refereeing and yet Jones, as usual, protested his innocence.

He claimed he had gone for the ball, got it and that Gullit had been rather too theatrical as he tumbled to the ground. The fact that the Incredible Hulk, let alone the elegant Dutchman, would have struggled to stay upright in the face of such a fierce challenge appeared to have escaped Jones.

It is the third time he has been sent off this season, although his premature exit in the 1-0 win against Liverpool in September was later annulled, on appeal, and reduced to a booking. He was also dismissed for two bookable offences, in the 4-1 defeat at Nottingham Forest last month and is still serving the five-match international suspension that was imposed for his sending-off when playing for Wales against Georgia in June.

Quite where Jones, 31 next month, goes now is a vexing question. He is on the transfer list, at his own request, and is becoming a liability as Wimbledon attempt to steer clear of relegation from the FA Carling Premiership. Birmingham City and West Bromwich Albion have been mooted as possibilities for his next move, but his erratic behaviour is limiting the options by the day. Apparently, the offer from non-League Walslington, with whom he started his tempestuous career, is still open.



Batty unleashes the shot that brought him his first goal for nearly three years and helped Blackburn Rovers to beat Manchester City

## Ball turns to Benfica in bid for survival

MANCHESTER City have turned to the Continent again to try to reinvigorate their attempt at survival in the FA Carling Premiership. Beaten 2-0 by Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on Tuesday night, they agreed yesterday to a two-month loan trial for Eduardo Abazaj, the Benfica central defender.

City now have five "foreigners" on their books, and against Blackburn became the first Premiership side to start a match with four overseas players since the rule change which means that European nationals are no longer classed as foreign players.

Abazaj, an Albanian international with a Portuguese passport, joins the German pair of Elke Trand and Uwe Rösler, Georgian Kinkladze, the

Georgian, and Ronnie Ekeund, the Danish forward, in Alan Ball's squad.

The Manchester City manager, meanwhile, had to reflect on an unexpected Blackburn double-act that left his side in the Premiership relegation zone. City might have expected to be on the wrong end of another strike by Alan Shearer, but when David Batty scored from 25 yards, his first goal since getting one for Leeds United against Middlesbrough in January 1993, Ball knew that it was not going to be his evening.

"Shearer's was a fabulous goal, but you can't expect Batty to hit one like that," Ball said. "Everybody worked hard. The way we kept possession and our passing were smashing. We just didn't take

our chances, though, and I feel very sorry for a lot of my lads because they deserved more than they got."

Had Niall Quinn hit the target rather than the post from six yards soon after Shearer's 24th goal of the season, City might have prevented Rovers from completing their seventh successive home league win. But with chances going begging, their belief began to drain, and City eventually had to be grateful to immer, their goalkeeper, and the woodwork, which denied Batty and Stuart Ripley, for restricting Blackburn's winning margin.

For Batty, two of whose four previous career goals had also been scored against City, it was the completion of a rare "hat-trick". "We'll let him keep the ball for that one

goal," Ray Harford, the Blackburn manager, said. Batty saw the funny side of things himself. "I always enjoy playing City," he said. "I suppose the goal was long overdue really, but it was a great ball from Alan that set it up. The crowd all knew I'd waited a long time, and so did the other players, but to be honest it's not a part of my game that really bothers me."

It bothered City, though, as Ball's resigned air intimated. Suddenly, the bright form that made him manager of the month in November must seem a distant memory.

Ball said: "We had chances but didn't hit the back of the net, and we haven't all season. We are missing them in the six-yard box, snatching at them, hitting the post, and not scoring."

Blackburn's performance, though, served once again to make a mockery of their form away from Ewood Park, where they have dropped five points from ten games. They have picked up only three on their travels, although Harford was quick to point out that their only defeat in seven games was the 5-0 mauling away to Coventry City on an ice-bound pitch at Highfield Road on December 9.

On Saturday, when Tottenham Hotspur visit Ewood Park, three records are on the line, and at least one of them must go. Shearer has scored in all ten of Blackburn's home matches, and their victory over City was their seventh in succession in the league, while Tottenham boast the Premiership's only unbeaten away record.

### FOR THE RECORD

#### BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Toronto 93 Milwaukee 87, Detroit 94 LA Clippers 88, Los Angeles 100 Golden State 90, Miami 96 New Jersey 93, Indiana 103 Chicago 97, Houston 100 Vancouver 84, Denver 114 Dallas 102, Utah 114 Portland 104, LA Lakers 102 Boston 91, Sacramento 115 San Antonio 98.

Eastern Conference Atlantic division W L Pts GB Orlando 22 6 788 7 New York 17 11 721 2 Miami 14 12 538 7 Boston 12 13 480 8 Washington 12 13 480 8 New Jersey 10 15 403 10 Philadelphia 8 19 298 15

Central division Chicago 23 3 885 — Indiana 14 11 860 8 Cleveland 13 12 820 9 Atlanta 13 13 500 10 Charlotte 13 14 481 10 Detroit 13 14 481 10 Milwaukee 9 16 360 13 Toronto 9 20 310 15

Western Conference Midwest division Houston 25 8 716 — San Antonio 17 9 661 1 Denver 12 12 522 2 Minnesota 7 18 280 11 Dallas 4 24 143 16

Pacific division Seattle 17 8 680 — Sacramento 18 9 640 1 LA Lakers 18 10 632 2 Phoenix 11 13 458 8 Portland 11 15 423 6 Golden State 10 16 384 7 LA Clippers 10 17 370 8

CRICKET CASTLE CLIP (second day of four): Part: Roland 231 (K Jackson 56, M W Phipps 57), Western Province 190-2 (H H Gibbs 57, 102 out), East London 188 (C Craven 47), Border 280-8 (P Symonds 58).

FOOTBALL Tuesday's late result FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP Blackburn 2 Man City 0.

#### GOLF

SONY WORLD RANKINGS: 1 G Norman (Aus) 21, 2 N Price (Can) 16, 3 B Langer (Ger) 15, 4 J Ees (Esa) 14, 5 C Morrongiame (Sct) 14, 6 S N Faldo (Eng) 13, 7 C Parn (Sct) 13, 8 F Couper (US) 11, 9 M Ozzi (Japan) 10, 10 S Elington (Aus) 10, 11 L Lehman (US) 9, 12 J M Ocasal (Spa) 9, 13 S Torrance (Sct) 8, 14 L Langan (US) 8, 15 V Singh (Ind) 8, 16 L Roberts (US) 8, 17 D Low (US) 7, 18 H Hoch (US) 7, 19 C Rocco (US) 7, 20 P Mickelson (US) 7, 21 D Frost (Sct) 7, 22 J Haza (US) 6, 23 S Ballesteros (Spa) 6, 24 J Galt (US) 6, 25 J Pines (US) 6, 26 J Campbell (US) 6, 27 J Frazier (US) 6, 28 J Frazier (US) 6, 29 J Frazier (US) 6, 30 J Frazier (US) 6, 31 J Frazier (US) 6, 32 J Frazier (US) 6, 33 J Frazier (US) 6, 34 J Frazier (US) 6, 35 J Frazier (US) 6, 36 J Frazier (US) 6, 37 J Frazier (US) 6, 38 J Frazier (US) 6, 39 J Frazier (US) 6, 40 J Frazier (US) 6, 41 J Frazier (US) 6, 42 J Frazier (US) 6, 43 J Frazier (US) 6, 44 J Frazier (US) 6, 45 J Frazier (US) 6, 46 J Frazier (US) 6, 47 J Frazier (US) 6, 48 J Frazier (US) 6, 49 J Frazier (US) 6, 50 J Frazier (US) 6, 51 J Frazier (US) 6, 52 J Frazier (US) 6, 53 J Frazier (US) 6, 54 J Frazier (US) 6, 55 J Frazier (US) 6, 56 J Frazier (US) 6, 57 J Frazier (US) 6, 58 J Frazier (US) 6, 59 J Frazier (US) 6, 60 J Frazier (US) 6, 61 J Frazier (US) 6, 62 J Frazier (US) 6, 63 J Frazier (US) 6, 64 J Frazier (US) 6, 65 J Frazier (US) 6, 66 J Frazier (US) 6, 67 J Frazier (US) 6, 68 J Frazier (US) 6, 69 J Frazier (US) 6, 70 J Frazier (US) 6, 71 J Frazier (US) 6, 72 J Frazier (US) 6, 73 J Frazier (US) 6, 74 J Frazier (US) 6, 75 J Frazier (US) 6, 76 J Frazier (US) 6, 77 J Frazier (US) 6, 78 J Frazier (US) 6, 79 J Frazier (US) 6, 80 J Frazier (US) 6, 81 J Frazier (US) 6, 82 J Frazier (US) 6, 83 J Frazier (US) 6, 84 J Frazier (US) 6, 85 J Frazier (US) 6, 86 J Frazier (US) 6, 87 J Frazier (US) 6, 88 J Frazier (US) 6, 89 J Frazier (US) 6, 90 J Frazier (US) 6, 91 J Frazier (US) 6, 92 J Frazier (US) 6, 93 J Frazier (US) 6, 94 J Frazier (US) 6, 95 J Frazier (US) 6, 96 J Frazier (US) 6, 97 J Frazier (US) 6, 98 J Frazier (US) 6, 99 J Frazier (US) 6, 100 J Frazier (US) 6.

RUGBY LEAGUE BURTONWOOD BREWERY LANCASHIRE CUP: First Postponed: Wodson v Bingleigh.

FIXTURES FOOTBALL SCHOOLS MATCHES: Premier League under-19 trophy, Norfolk v Essex (at Norwich, 10). Premier League under-16 trophy, Inner London v Cambridgeshire (at Egham, 11). Keri v Sussex (at Coburn 20).

OTHER SPORT BASKETBALL: Badminton League: Worthing v Newcastle (8.0). DARTS: WDC championship (Leamington, Purbeck). HOCKEY: Under-15, under-17 divisional tournament (Bristol).

ICE HOCKEY: British League: First division: Swindon v Bracknell (8.0). SNOOKER: Dr Martens European League (Diamond Centre, Irthlingborough).

#### RUGBY UNION

Club match Leicester 81 Barbarians 25 Leicester: Triggs, Hackney (2), Underwood (2), Kardon, Richards, Back, Corns, Harris (3), Pines, Hines (2), Barberians: Triggs, Bore, Stiles, Proctor, Corns, King (2), Pines, King (2).

IRTHLINGBOROUGH: Dr Martens European League (Diamond Centre, Irthlingborough) 8.0. Frame score (Edon Bray, 65-0, 61-60, 74-5, 93-18, 70-5, 78-0, 71-64, 62-19).

SNOKER BRITISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Birmingham 3, Sheffield 4, Cardiff 5, Nottingham 5, First division: Doncaster 16, 19.

ICE HOCKEY BRITISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Birmingham 3, Sheffield 4, Cardiff 5, Nottingham 5, First division: Doncaster 16, 19.

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#### WORLD RANKINGS

Murrayfield 2, Solihull 2, Glastonbury 21, Tolson 10, Midway 3.

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Detroit 3, St Louis 2, NY Islanders 3, Boston 3 (OT), NY Rangers 6, Ottawa 4, Pittsburgh 5, Buffalo 3, Washington 4, Montreal 3, Chicago 5, Dallas 3, Colorado 5, San Jose 1, Calgary 4, Vancouver 2.

Eastern Conference Atlantic division W L Pts F A Florida 25 8 2 125 118 Los Angeles 23 10 6 132 107 Philadelphia 21 10 5 131 90 Washington 18 13 3 94 80 Tampa Bay 14 15 6 103 119 New Jersey 14 14 2 86 141 NY Islanders 6 21 6 87 134

Northwest division Pittsburgh 22 9 3 166 104 Montreal 18 15 3 105 107 Toronto 18 11 6 116 111 Boston 14 14 5 119 123 Hartford 11 18 2 85 107 Chicago 7 26 1 5 67

Western Conference Central division W L Pts F A Detroit 25 7 2 133 72 Toronto 18 11 6 116 111 Boston 14 14 5 119 123 Hartford 11 18 2 85 107 Chicago 7 26 1 5 67

Pacific division Colorado 21 11 5 154 107 Los Angeles 23 10 6 132 107 Vancouver 18 13 3 122 124 Anaheim 13 21 3 111 125 Edmonton 18 13 3 111 125 Winnipeg 9 20 2 86 141 San Jose 8 24 4 108 164

WORCESTER, Massachusetts: World under-19 championship. GROUP A: Finland 5, Switzerland 1; Canada 6, United States 1.

W L Pts F A Finland 1 0 0 2 5 0 Canada 0 0 0 0 0 0 United States 0 0 0 0 0 0 Switzerland 0 0 0 0 0 0

GROUP B: Czech Republic 5, Russia 2; Sweden 6, Slovakia 0.

W L Pts F A Sweden 1 0 0 2 6 0 Czech Republic 1 0 0 2 5 0 Slovakia 0 0 0 0 0 0 Russia 0 0 0 0 0 0

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# New year resolutions to make sense of the sporting world

A new world is but a new mind. At the end of the year everybody is entitled to dream of what the coming one may bring. The page is fresh; all it needs is the doers and makers to write down their deeds in ink.

In the world of sport, next year's bill of fare includes the Olympic Games in Atlanta, the cricket World Cup, football's European championship in England and the first season in rugby union's brave new professional world. Who will feast the longest?

We are encouraged to make new year resolutions and usually mislay them before Twelfth Night. Still, this is the time to fashion the world in a way that satisfies our urge for order. Therefore, begging pardon for such indulgence, let us hope that:

France win the five nations' championship with the flair that is evidently beyond buttoned-up England.

Television interviewers stop trading pally banalities with football managers and, instead of making tame assertions ("it's always good to get a point"), ask some proper questions.

**Terry Venables at last learns to decline the verb, 'to do'**

Frank Bruno retires, without any broken bones, to enjoy his career beyond the ring as a licensed buffoon.

Jonathan Edwards continues to demonstrate that, splendid though success is, neither the winning nor even the taking part is ever the most important thing in life.

Damon Hill admits: "Fair dos, Michael is obviously the better driver."

England meet and beat Australia in the World Cup final in Lahore on

March 17, to give Michael Atherton encouragement that he is getting somewhere.

Terry Venables learns to decline the verb, "to do".

David Mellor gives up English domestic.

Radio 5 Live presenters discover the vowel.

People leave Liam Botham and Peter Phillips alone until they do something worth writing about, and leave Ian Botham alone until he says something worth writing about.

We get through that increasingly tiresome tennis tournament in south London without any reference to strawberries, or shots of loafing film stars.

Jack Rowell owns up to his own mistakes.

Kevin Keegan, from whom Rowell could absorb a lesson or two about responsibility, wins the FA Carling Premiership for Newcastle United.

Fred Trueman is dropped from the Test Match Special team before

## SPORTING RESOLUTIONS



MICHAEL HENDERSON

there is a fatality on air and his colleagues in the commentary box are taken away "to assist police with their inquiries".

The Rugby Football League imposes a ten-point handicap on Wigan in the Challenge Cup. Otherwise, hand it to them now.

The Football Association declares that any club that offers

George Graham a job will be fined £5 million and docked 25 points, with no right of appeal.

IN THE manner of Jonathan Swift, it is tempting to offer in addition a few "modest proposals". Thus, in a perfect world it would be possible to arrange for:

"Prince" Naseem Hamed, the World Boxing Organisation featherweight champion with a mouth as wide as the Humber, to be picked in the England front row against France in Paris on January 20. With luck he might never open it again.

The BBC to appoint a new head of children's television programmes in the interests of "relevance": someone with a knowledge of the uniformed mind, a limited vocabulary and an emotional kinship with the *Blue Peter* set. This is clearly a job for Paul Gascoigne.

Anybody wearing a baseball cap the wrong way round to be put in the stocks for a week. In the case

of Ian Wright and Chris Lewis, who have "previous", a month at least.

Brian Lara plc to spend a day as an invisible witness in the Australia dressing-room, to see how responsible adults behave in a team environment. An afternoon with them would remind him that he owes cricket much more than the game will ever owe him.

The following words and phrases to be outlawed: genius, icon, guru, outfit, emotive, gaffer, Brit, enthrone, creative, lifestyle, well pleased, all credit, wall-to-wall, check out, the business (as in do), Radio and television folk who use them will be gagged and forced to listen to Sir Alec Guinness reading Eliot's *Four Quartets*, to discover the nobility of English when it is written and spoken by a master.

Linford Christie, who compared his autobiography with the Bible, no less, to join a think-tank comprising Sir Isaiah Berlin, Alfred Brendel and Jonathan Miller on a remodelled Late Night Line-up panel to discuss "Life in the fast lane: art, metaphysics, track and field".

**Damon Hill admits: 'Fair dos, Michael is obviously the better driver'**

THREE memories of 1995, from "abroad". For pleasure, Manhattan: watching the Europe team regain the Ryder Cup on television in a Madison Avenue bar. For amusement, Paris: discussing cricket over dinner with the American baritone, Thomas Hampson. For education, Soweto: observing the crowd at England's opening first-class game on their tour of South Africa. It is not often that sport helps to change a country.

John Bryant is on holiday

## Nomadic club's future appears brighter despite defeat at Leicester

# Barbarians find tradition has a price

Leicester ..... 51  
Barbarians ..... 25

By DAVID HANDS  
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE future of the Barbarians has been stabilised by an extension of their established sponsorship arrangements. However, the playing future of the most famous nomadic club in the world remains shrouded after Leicester equalled their highest score in the traditional Christmas fixture at a frosty Welford Road yesterday.

Yet judgments must be made on a broad canvas. This was, after all, the champions of England creaking back into action after a period of comparative hibernation against a guest XV whose selections were limited by national demands and who were nevertheless seeking to combine youth, experience, and a dash of overseas flavouring. Yet they were encouraged by a new three-year agreement with Scottish Amicable which should ensure their ability to compete at home and, more particularly, away.

That more than 15,000 spectators were warmed by a competitive first half, then

Gloucester have recruited Alastair Saverimuttu, the former England Colts centre, from Coventry. Saverimuttu, 25, who has also played for Bath and Bristol, is the second emerging player to join Gloucester within a week after Trevor Woodman, 19, the England Under-21 prop forward, moved to them from Bath.

nourished by a second-half explosion which brought Leicester six of their seven tries, should also be remembered. "The club has many friends within the game, who appreciate our value in bringing players together and encouraging them to display all their skills," Mickey Steele-Bodger, the Barbarians president, said.

Significantly, too, Leicester continue to prize the game, though next year they will have a delicate dilemma to solve. The fixture is scheduled for a Friday, 24 hours before a league match, and if Leicester are as good as their word they will ask for a league postponement so that they can honour tradition even amid the paraphernalia of professionalism.

Even so, the Barbarians will concede the need to pay players if they have to, while hoping that the fundamental reasons for representing the club can be sustained. Moreover, if Leicester play against Sale in the Courage Clubs



A full-length tackle by Shiel, right, the Barbarians centre, forces Hackney, the wing who scored two tries for Leicester, to concede possession

Championship on Saturday with as much *joie de vivre* as they did yesterday, their members, too, can look forward to a happy new year.

They will have been encouraged by the display of their two centres, Delaney and Robinson, particularly the latter, whose form was sufficiently wayward to have caused his omission from this fixture until the withdrawal with a knee injury of James Overend. Delaney, a student at Leicester University, grew in stature as the match progressed, aided greatly by Leicester's domination of possession after the interval. Yet the Leicester crowd is discerning enough to recognise opposition skills, notably those of Leigh Davies,

the bustling youngster from Neath, whose outside breaks are a comparative rarity in the modern game. Had the Barbarians' finishing been as good as their creative midfield running, their first-half lead would have been more substantial than 13-11.

Their forwards drove Berek

over the line for the first try of the game and although Underwood responded with his tenth in the series, Leicester had to wait until the second half before taking a grip. This was their fourth successive win over the Barbarians and was ensured by two tries in three minutes from Hackney. The wing, playing his hundredth game for the club, finished off some outstanding team tries earlier this season, and he thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity given partly by good application of the advantage law by Derek Bevan, partly by a telling pass from Kilford. His second try, preceded by a thunderous hand-off by Cockerill, carried him 60 metres past a despairing

defence and earned him the man-of-the-match award.

Thereafter the Barbarians were chasing shadows. Any try by Richards is greeted by delight at Welford Road, and Back evokes similar elation. In between, however, Underwood scored his second try after splendid driving play by Rowntree which he will do well to reproduce when Leicester take themselves to Bath on the first Saturday in the new year.

The crowd looked forward to their team surpassing the 51 points scored against the Barbarians in 1993; instead it was their guests who signed off with two tries, the first of them made by the fluent King and scored by the forceful South

African, Straeuli, the second by Proctor after Leicester, uncharacteristically, turned over possession with their defence away.

SCORERS: Leicester: Tries: Hackney (2), Underwood (2), Kilford, Richards, Back. Conversion: Harris (2). Penalty goals: Harris (2). Barbarians: Tries: Berek, Straeuli, Proctor. Conversion: King (2). Penalty goals: King (2).

LEICESTER: W Kilford, S Hackney, P Delaney, R Robinson, R Underwood, J Harris, A Kockorovic, G Rowntree, R Cockerill, C Tardock, P Gurni, M Poole, N Back, D Richards. BARBARIANS: J Thomas (Lancashire and Wales), D Loughhead (Toronto Welsh and Wales), L Davies (North), G Shiel (Aberdeen and Scotland), W Proctor (Lancashire and Wales), A King (Bristol Welsh), A Gomerall (Worcester), M Millar (Ulster and Western Samoa), S Baskin (Ulster), P Paterson (Western Samoa), D Laperriere (Ulster), P Wilson (Newcastle and Scotland), R Berek (Ulster), G Prosser (Pontypridd and Wales), I Morrison (London Scottish and Scotland), R Straeuli (Tennessee and South Africa). Referee: D Bevan (Wales).

## SPORT IN BRIEF

### Lara leads moves to West Indies return

BRIAN LARA is expected to take the first step towards a return to the West Indies team today when he leads Trinidad and Tobago in a Red Stripe Cup trial match. Lara's future as an international cricketer has been in some doubt since he withdrew from the West Indies squad at present touring Australia after being fined for breaches of conduct during the tour of England last summer. Lara subsequently threatened to retire from the sport.

"We are all looking forward to seeing him back making runs," Theo Cuffy, the Trinidad and Tobago team manager, said yesterday. "It will be great to see him out there. He has had his rest and he wants to get back to playing cricket. He is looking relaxed and at ease. This holiday has done him a world of good." Cuffy said that Lara will captain the team when the Red Stripe Cup begins next month, and intimated that he expected Lara to play for West Indies in the World Cup, which begins in February.

### Taylor's smooth start

DARTS: Phil Taylor made an impressive start to his defence of the Vernons Pools World Championship in Purfleet, Essex yesterday by beating Cliff Lazarenko 3-0 in his opening frame match. Taylor, the top seed, was never troubled, firing five maximum 180s during the match. He twice won the Embassy World Championship before the breakaway World Darts Council was formed in 1993 and he said: "It would be nice to do the double in both championships." Another former Embassy champion, Jocky Wilson, who suffers from diabetes, has withdrawn from the tournament on medical advice.

### Council halts bout

BOXING: James Murray's death after his recent British bantamweight title contest with Drew Docherty in Glasgow has led to boxing being banned at a sports centre in Pottery Bar, Hertsmere Council, owner of the Furzefield Centre, has called a halt at a venue where Mark Delaney was due to defend his World Boxing Organisation Inter-Continental super-middleweight title against the Welsh champion, Darron Griffiths, on January 23. Barry Hearn's Matchroom organisation staged three promotions there this year but this bout has been switched to Bethnal Green.

### Ebdon whitewash

SNOOKER: Peter Ebdon stormed to a superb 8-0 victory over Ken Doherty in the opening match of the Dr Martens European snooker League in Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, yesterday. Ebdon chalked up a best break of 93 in the fourth frame and added further runs of 78 and 71 in taking the sixth and seventh respectively. Play-off places in the event can be decided on frame difference, so Ebdon was thrilled to have started in such magnificent form. "I felt very confident out there and my game flowed nicely," he said. Ebdon plays Ronnie O'Sullivan today.

### Americans team up

TENNIS: A United States team has been brought into the Hopman Cup exhibition tournament starting in Perth, Western Australia, on Saturday after the late withdrawal of Sweden. The Swedes were forced to withdraw their team after Mats Wilander, the former world No 1, suffered a back injury. Richey Reneberg and Claudia Rubin will now team up to represent the United States. The other nations competing are: Australia, Croatia, France, Germany, Holland, South Africa and Switzerland.

### Buccaneers sack Wyche

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Sam Wyche, the head coach of Tampa Bay Buccaneers, was dismissed yesterday after failing to turn around the team's fortunes in four seasons. The departure was rumoured after the Buccaneers lost seven of their last nine games, after a 5-2 start, and finished 7-9 for their fourteenth consecutive losing season. The record, though, was Tampa Bay's best since 1981 in a non-strike year. Wyche's dismissal came one day after the Arizona Cardinals fired their coach, Buddy Ryan.

## Windsurfers ride out gale

By BARRY PICKTHALL

WINDSURFING has been through the hoops this year. Two British sailors - Nik Baker and Jamie Hawkins - may have won two world championships, but the sport was left struggling under the strain of debts of about £1.1 million when the Professional Windsurfing Association (PWA), the organiser of the world tour, was forcibly wound up after a competitor-led coup midway through the season.

Competitors were left without their prize-money and sponsors who support this £11 million annual circus were left decidedly uneasy. Many saw parallels with the hula hoop craze - a sport that had reached its zenith and is now in a tail-spin decline, yet, as the year ends, the 200 men

and women who make up the world tour see a brighter future.

After wresting control of events and what money was left in the coffers, the competitors, led by Phil McGain and Stuart Sawyer, have changed their name to the Professional Windsurfing Association (PWA) and won increased support, not just from sponsors but from television as well, for a ten-month tour. Competition will start in Grand Canaria at the end of February and finish with the indoor world championship at Amsterdam next December, when Baker will be defending his title.

The tour, which carries \$2 million (about £1.3 million) in prize-money and has helped several windsurfers to become

millionaires, is now being managed by SSM, a British-based sports marketing company at Chelsea Wharf.

Samantha Brewster, the solo British yachtswoman who set out from Southampton in October to challenge Mike Golding's world east-west circumnavigation record, sailing against the prevailing winds and currents, is to restart her voyage from Santos, Brazil, on January 1. She put into the Brazilian port earlier this month to make repairs to the rig on her 67ft yacht *Heath Insured*. The 27-year-old from Ipswich intends to continue around Cape Horn and return to Santos after rounding the Cape of Good Hope and completing a loop up the Atlantic to Ushant, her original starting point.

HEAD winds of 25 knots yesterday slowed the progress of *Sayonara*, the United States maxi yacht, as she continued to lead the way in the Sydney-Hobart race. Choppy seas caused further difficulties, putting her an hour behind the schedule needed to beat the record time for the 630 nautical-mile event.

*Sayonara*, the favourite, had been four hours ahead of the required rate, after progressing down the east coast of Australia at average speeds of 12.5 knots during the day and 10.5 knots at night. The onset of the south westerly winds, however, reduced her to an average of 9.34 knots.

*Sayonara*, made of carbon fibre and powered by computer-moulded Kevlar sails, needs to average 10.2 knots in

order to beat the record of two days, 14 hours, 36 minutes and 56 seconds set by *Kialoa*, the American maxi ketch, in 1975. Encouragingly, a 30-knot westerly wind blowing across Hobart would favour the yacht when she reaches the east coast of Tasmania. "Whether she breaks the record is now touch and go," Peter Campbell, the race spokesman, said.

Her owner, Larry Ellison, the co-founder and chief executive of the Oracle Corporation, is on board with his friend, Rupert Murdoch, the chairman and chief executive of The News Corporation, parent company of The Times.

Amazon, the Australian pocket maxi, was second, five miles behind *Sayonara*, with another Australian craft,

*Brindabella*, dropping off the pace a further seven miles behind.

Two yachts in the 98-strong fleet hit whales yesterday, causing one, *Future Shock*, to retire with a broken rudder. The 56ft Australian entry, which had been in seventh place, was the first casualty of what is one of the most gruelling yacht races in the world.

Several whales have been sighted off the south east coast of Australia in recent days and a general warning about the dangers they present has been issued to all competitors.

Humpback whales, which can grow to 50 feet in length and weigh up to 26 tonnes, migrate to warmer waters along the eastern coast to give birth at this time of year.

## Winds thwart Sayonara

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

## WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 35

BEQUIBA

(a) A Brazilian timber-tree, *Virola bicuhyba*. Used attributively in *bequiaba nut*, the fruit of an aromatic Brazilian tree. From Portuguese or Tupi *bicuhyba*. Beechiba, or Bequiaba nut, a species of nut from Brazil, the cumulative kernel ranked among balsamic remedies.

ECTROMELIA

(a) The congenital absence of a limb or limbs. From the Greek *ektromis* miscarriage + *melos* a limb. "Case of Ectromelia: Kosmak reports, with an illustration, a case showing entire absence of the upper extremities. There is not a dimple indicating where the arms ought to appear."

CANA

(a) A spirit resembling rum made from sugar cane, from the Spanish *cana* cane.

CHOWCHILLA

(a) The black-headed log-runner (*Orthonyx spaldingi*), a small bird found in the mountain ranges in Queensland. Imitative of its note.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Qd4! (attacking the rook on h4) 1... Rg8 2 Bd2 and the black queen is trapped.

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